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## **The coalition and the coercion of Iraq, 1991-1999**

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THE COALITION AND THE COERCION OF IRAQ 1991-1999

VOLUME TWO

James McKay

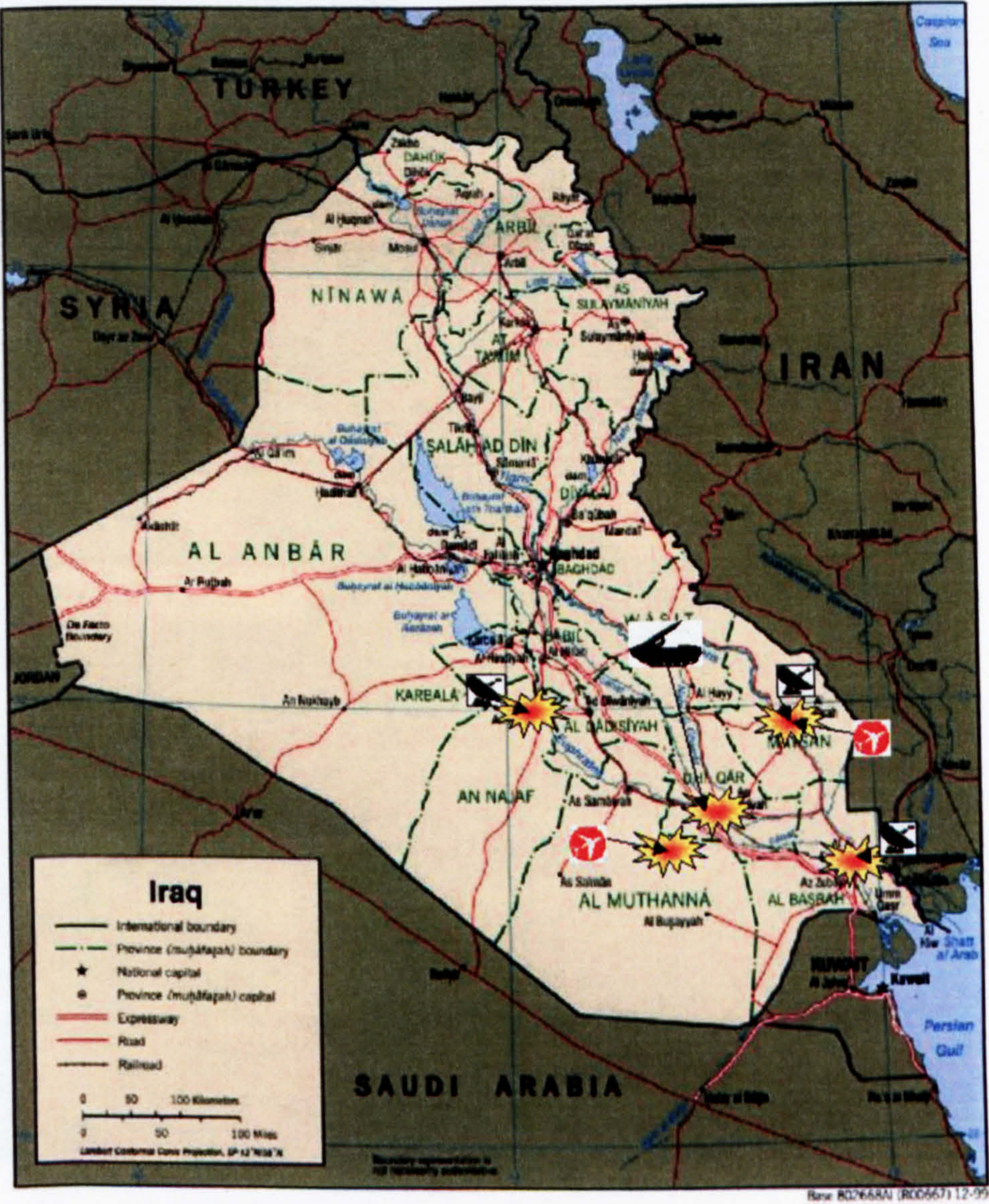
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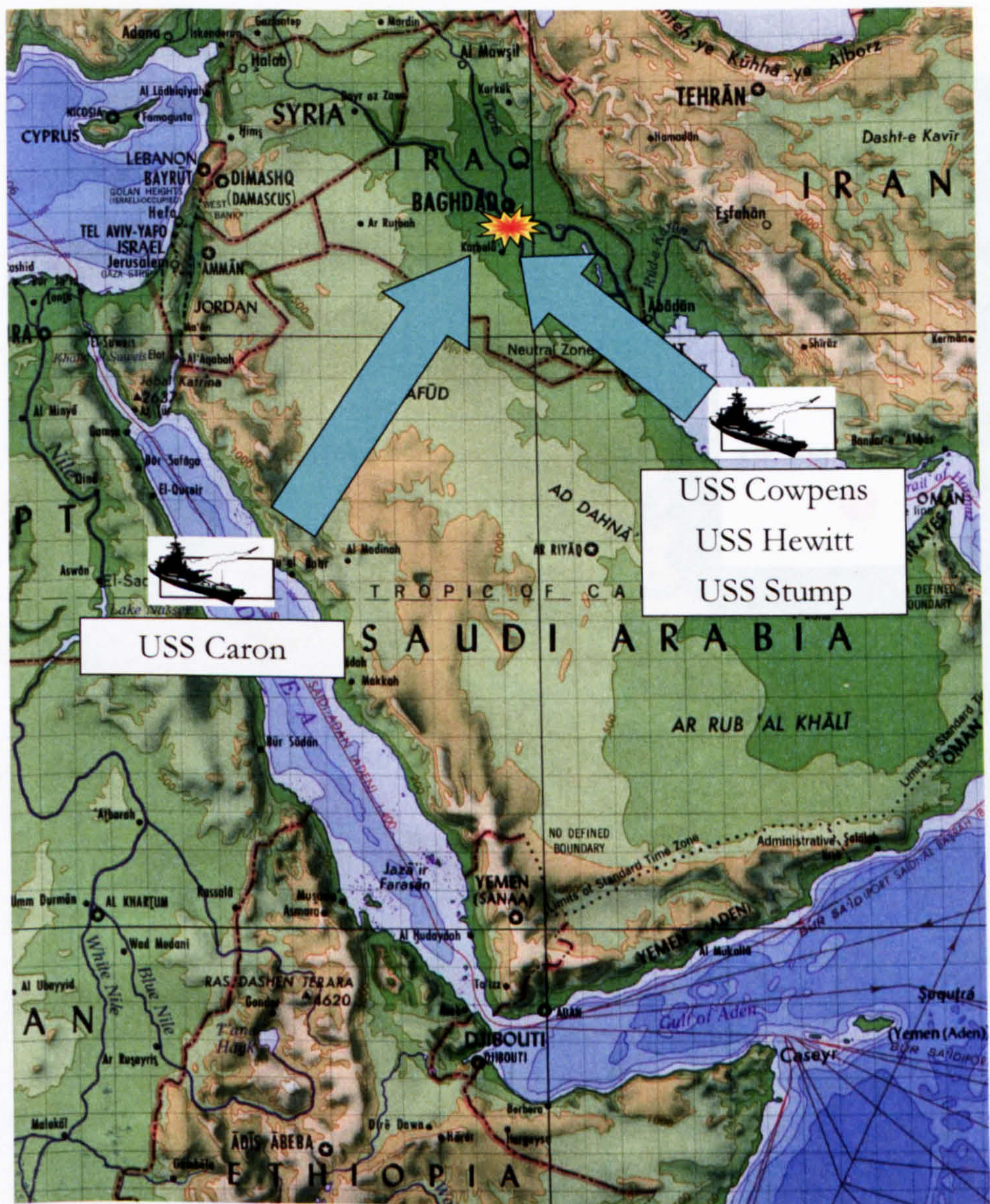
Figure 18: Targets 13 January 1993



Map courtesy of the Perry-Castañeda Map Library, University of Texas at Austin



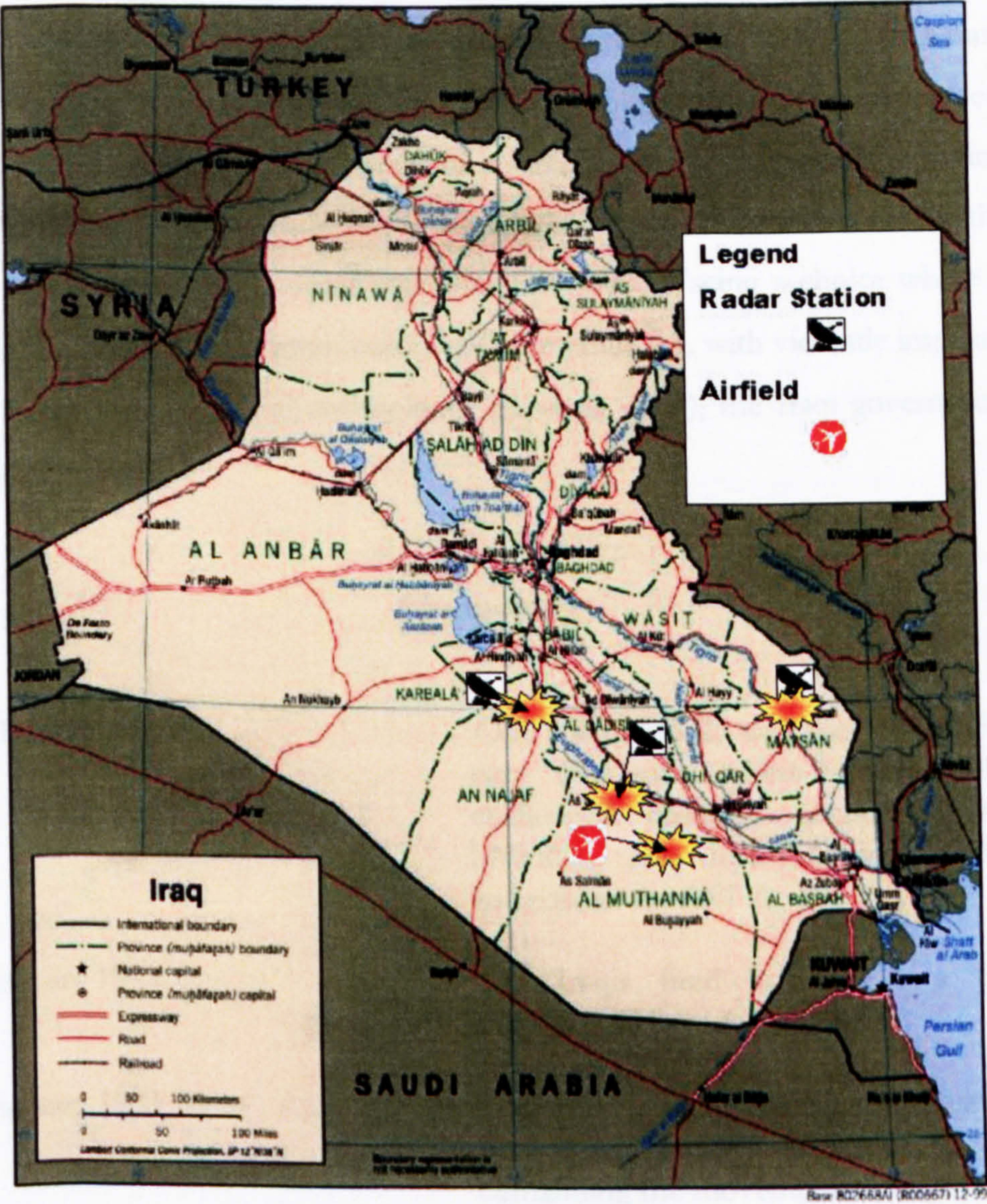
Figure 19: Targets 17 January 1993



Map courtesy of the Perry-Castañeda Map Library, University of Texas at Austin



Figure 20: Targets 18 January 1993



Map courtesy of the Perry-Castañeda Map Library, University of Texas at Austin



CHAPTER 8: JANUARY 1993

In late December 1992 and early January 1993, Iraq began to harass the coalition while defying the UN. The coalition attacked air defence assets in southern Iraq in order to reduce the possibility of coalition casualties during the SNFZ enforcement and after that, a WMD production site to coerce the Iraqi government into compliance with SCR 687. Facing a choice where it could be disarmed and monitored either forcefully (i.e. with violently imposed costs) or peacefully (without violently imposed costs), the Iraqi government chose the latter.

**Chronology**

27 December 1992	One Iraqi MiG-25 was shot down after two incidents where Iraqi MiGs challenged coalition aircraft in the SNFZ. Iraq deployed mobile SAM batteries in the SNFZ.
2 January 1993	The Iraqis fired a SAM at a U-2 supporting UNSCOM.
6 January 1993	The US, UK, France, and Russian Federation issued a demarche to Iraq demanding the movement of the mobile SAMs north of the 32nd parallel.
7 January 1993	Iraq announced that it was suspending UNSCOM's overflight and landing rights.
8 January 1993	Iraq announced it would comply with the demarche.
10 January 1993	An Iraqi mob broke into the former Iraqi naval base at Umm Qasr and stole some munitions.



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- 11 January 1993                      Iraqi SAM batteries were deployed in the NNFZ.
- 13 January 1993                      A series of airstrikes was conducted against targets in southern Iraq.
- 15 January 1993                      The UN time limit for the removal of the Iraqi police posts in the DMZ expired.
- 16 January 1993                      While harassing coalition patrols over the NNFZ, the Iraqi government offered to guarantee the safety of UNSCOM flights only if they approached from Jordanian airspace.
- 17 January 1993                      The Iraqi government announced it would withdraw the police posts in the DMZ, and offered to allow UNSCOM flights from Bahrain to enter only if the coalition did not fly over the SNFZ during UNSCOM's flights.
- The USS Cowpens, USS Hewitt, USS Stump, and the USS Caron launched a series of Tomahawk cruise missiles at the Zaafaraniyah Advanced Engineering Facility in suburban Baghdad.
- 18 January 1993                      The Iraqi government reiterated the previous day's offer.
- A second series of strikes was conducted against the southern Iraqi air defences.
- 22 January 1993                      President William J. Clinton assumed the American presidency. Iraq offered a goodwill cease-fire and it was refused.



### Catalysts/Causes for Coercion

At issue were Iraq's lack of compliance with SCR 687 and opposition to the NFZs. There were three specific areas of contention with regard to SCR 687. These were the Iraqi police posts on Kuwaiti territory, the incursion into UNIKOM's headquarters and seizure of munitions by an Iraqi mob on 10 January 1993 and Iraq's denial of overflight rights to UNSCOM on 7 January.

Iraq and Kuwait were responsible for law and order on their respective sides of the DMZ, meaning that each state needed to maintain a police presence in the zone. Between June and September 1991, Iraq moved a series of 14 police posts into the DMZ, and five were in Kuwaiti territory. UNIKOM asked the Iraqi authorities to move them, only to be told that they: '... had been in place before 2 August 1990 and that pulling them back would prejudice Iraq's position regarding the demarcation of the border. Once the demarcation had taken place, Iraq would comply with the "reasonable distance" principle ...'<sup>1</sup> The UNSC approval of UNIKBDC's findings on the land boundary in November 1992 meant that the forts had to move by the UNSC's assignation of a deadline: 15 January 1993.<sup>2</sup>

UNIKOM headquarters was housed in the former Iraqi naval base in the town of Umm Qasr. Its security was a concern, as a number of Iraqi anti-ship missiles and other munitions remained in the base. The UN Secretariat and UNSC were well aware that these munitions posed a security threat and

<sup>1</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on UNIKOM', S/23000, 3 September 1991, UN, p. 297.

<sup>2</sup> 'Letter dated 8 January 1993 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General', Annex I to 'Special report by the Secretary-General on UNIKOM', S/25085, 10 January 1993, UN, p. 514., and 'Statement by the President of the Security Council concerning general and specific obligations of Iraq under various Security Council resolutions relating to the situation between Iraq and Kuwait', S/24386, 23 November 1992, UN, p. 487.



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were exploring options for their destruction.<sup>3</sup> On 10 January 1993, the Secretary-General reported that:

. . . this morning at about 0700 local time, a party of some 200 Iraqis with trucks and heavy loading equipment forced entry into the six ammunition bunkers located in a former Iraqi naval base at Umm Qasr, on Kuwaiti territory, and took away most of their contents, including four “HY-2G” anti-ship missiles . . . up to 500 Iraqi personnel continued today to dismantle prefabricated buildings in the former naval base, also on Kuwaiti territory, and to remove the parts and other items. This activity is in violation of the procedure established by the Security Council . . .<sup>4</sup>

This was a violation of the arms embargo that rendered UNIKOM headquarters literally homeless.

Iraq’s interference with UNSCOM was more troubling. On 7 January 1993, the Iraqi government, citing reasons of sovereignty, informed UNSCOM that it should be using Iraqi aircraft instead of UN aircraft.<sup>5</sup> It seemed that Iraq sought to play the UN and coalition against one and other.

The American government and military were very concerned about the risk of taking casualties over the SNFZ. During late 1992, it became apparent that the Iraqi armed forces were trying to challenge the coalition’s ‘command of the air’ over southern Iraq.<sup>6</sup> There was other evidence that supported this conclusion. The Iraqi air force began to send its fighters into the SNFZ when coalition aircraft were not present as a form of challenge.<sup>7</sup> On 2 January 1993, an Iraqi air defence battery fired a SAM at a U-2

<sup>3</sup> ‘Letter dated 3 November 1992 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General’, Annex III to S/25085, UN, p. 515.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Special Report by the Secretary-General on UNIKOM’, S/25085 (10 January 1993), UN, p. 513. ‘HY-2G’ are Chinese-made anti-ship missiles popularly called ‘Silkworm’.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Statement by the President of the Security Council concerning United Nations flights into Iraqi territory’, S/25081, 8 January 1993, UN, pp. 512-513.

<sup>6</sup> See: CIS H380-11, p. 1, and ‘Joint Chiefs of Staff Briefing on Current Military Operations’, CIS S201-2, 29 January 1993, pp. 47-48, and 59 for details.

<sup>7</sup> White, p. 16.



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conducting an overflight of Iraqi territory on behalf of UNSCOM.<sup>8</sup> A number of Iraqi mobile air defence systems, such as SA-2 and SA-3 missiles, moved into the SNFZ in late December and early January.<sup>9</sup> General Hoar recalled that:

Intelligence had revealed that the Iraqi Air Force had been making provocative attempt[s] to 'trap' individual aircraft. For example, an individual coalition plane might run across a single Iraqi fighter violating the zone. If he pursued, the Iraqi would cut and fly low. Meanwhile, two or three other Iraqi fighters would be waiting at a much higher altitude to trap and shoot down the Coalition plane. It appeared that a confrontation was looming, with their attempts to trap and the sudden activity with their air defence system. The latter was also dangerous, because their integrated system allowed them to lock the target with one radar, and pass the information to the others. This meant that it only took a second of lock for them to be able to fire on a plane . . . Their next step would have been to shoot down one of our aircraft in the 'Box' or a successful use of the 'MiG trap', which was the enticement to fight with others waiting. The provocations did not come so much from the air defence sites, but the intent was to prevent their use in support of the provocative use of aircraft.<sup>10</sup>

The JTF-SWA came to realise that the Iraqi air force was capable of sophisticated tactics that required the co-ordination of both air defence assets and aircraft.<sup>11</sup> It was more concerned about the Iraqi air force than the air defence assets as the former were more mobile and less predictable.

What was Iraq trying to achieve? There appeared to be three interdependent objectives. By creating situations where casualties could be inflicted on coalition forces or UN forces along the Iraqi-Kuwaiti frontier, the Iraqi government sought to force a withdrawal or curtailment of the activities of such forces. By harassing UNSCOM and UNIKOM, the Iraqi government

<sup>8</sup> CIS S201-2, p. 48.

<sup>9</sup> M. Gordon, 'Iraq Is Reported to Move Missiles Into Areas Patrolled by U.S. Jets', NYT, 5 January 1993.

<sup>10</sup> Hoar interview, pp. 2-3 and 3-4.

<sup>11</sup> White, p. 25.



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sought to compel the coalition to use force, therefore, placing coalition forces at risk.

The US, in concert with its coalition partners and the Russian Federation, initially tried to defuse the situation with an ultimatum. All four governments demanded that the SAMs be removed from the SNFZ:

. . . the Perm Four -- that is, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States -- delivered the warning yesterday afternoon [6 January 1993] to Nizar Hamdoon, the Iraqi Permanent Representative to the United Nations. After that, the message was also given to the head of the Iraqi Interests Section here in Washington . . . It was a clear warning that told them to stop violating the "no-fly" zone. It asked them for specific actions, and it asked them to comply right away . . . "Remove the missiles beyond the 32nd Parallel" . . .<sup>12</sup>

This gave the Iraqis 48 hours to move the missiles out of the SNFZ. This meant that by 2230 GMT on 8 January, the missiles had to be back in central Iraq.<sup>13</sup> The coalition threatened to use force if Iraq failed to comply with the demarche.

The Iraqi government argued its sovereignty was at stake. Nizar Hamdoon stated: 'Iraq does not recognise the no-fly zone because it is not a U.N. job. It was imposed by three Western powers and, based on that, Iraq reserves its right to move whatever it wants at the time it deems necessary.'<sup>14</sup> He argued that Iraqi sovereignty could not be compromised without Iraqi consent; this was an argument consistent with paragraph three of SCR 688 and the 1991 MoU on humanitarian relief in Iraq.<sup>15</sup> However, Iraqi actions and its government's refusal to cooperate with UNSCOM suggested that it

<sup>12</sup> DoS DPB, 7 January 1993, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> M. Gordon, 'Iraq Is Reported to Move Missiles Into Areas Patrolled by U.S. Jets', NYT, 5 January 1993.

<sup>14</sup> Hamdoon cited in 'US Press Release: Iraq Ignores Allied Warning, 7 January 1993', in Weller, Ed., p. 735.

<sup>15</sup> See p. 161 above.



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would not comply with UN resolutions, including the aforementioned MoU.<sup>16</sup> This weakened the Iraqi argument about sovereignty.

The coalition had two aims during the January 1993 crisis. First, it wanted to secure Iraqi compliance with SCR 687 and all of its programs. Marlin Fitzwater, the White House spokesperson, stated after the Umm Qasr incident that:

This episode should make clear to Iraq that interference with U.N. and coalition operations, including humanitarian relief operations, Operation Provide Comfort, United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, and the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM) force on the Iraq-Kuwait border, will not be tolerated. In this regard, we fully support the U.N. Security Council presidential statement of January 6 that demanded that Iraq comply with its obligations. We underscore the Security Council's warning of serious consequences if Iraq fails to do so.<sup>17</sup>

If Iraq was successfully coerced into compliance with SCR 687 and its antecedents by the coalition, the worrisome threat to regional stability posed by Iraq would be reduced.

Second, the coalition wanted to reduce the possibility of casualties stemming from Iraqi resistance over both NFZs. The demarche obtained the desired concession in word but not in spirit. After the missiles were moved from the SNFZ, some SAM batteries appeared in the NNFZ.<sup>18</sup> The American government saw this as a renewed attempt at provocation. In a 12 January television interview, Marlin Fitzwater remarked that:

<sup>16</sup> Graham-Brown, pp. 298 and 309.

<sup>17</sup> 'Iraq Apparently Accedes to Coalition's No-Fly Demands', White House Press Release, (henceforth WHPR) 12 January 1993, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> M. Gordon, 'Iraq Is Said to Shift Missiles Into Excluded Zone in North', NYT, 12 January 1993, and D. Osborne and C. Richards, 'Border raids by Iraq fuel anger in US', Independent, 12 January 1993.



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We're very concerned about this third incident because it continues the pattern of cheating on the U.N. resolutions that we've been seeing over the last several weeks. Saddam has obviously picked up this activity in the last many [sic] days. He's tried to get around the resolutions in any number of ways. So the U.N. condemnation last night really put the world community on record as saying this is not acceptable and we're now in a position of watching to see how he may proceed from here. It is a matter of extreme concern.<sup>19</sup>

If a threat to the planes enforcing the NFZs existed, then the coalition was less able to control the skies with impunity. The coalition's ability to monitor the situation would be jeopardised. In a Department of State press briefing, it was stated that:

There's a threat to U.S. forces and to allied forces as long as Iraq maintains its aggressive posture down there. I mean, they have repeatedly violated the "no-fly" zone. They've augmented their surface-to-air assets, their missiles, in the "no-fly" zone. Those actions or violations are covered with -- coupled with -- other actions that suggest an aggressive intent. That circumstance has made it necessary for the coalition to take measures to ensure the safety of its aircrews, and to discourage further Iraqi attempts to evade the "no-fly" regime in both the north and the south. Until Iraq changes its attitude basically, that sort of aggressive posture and intent will not have dissipated.<sup>20</sup>

The aim of any use of force was to prevent coalition casualties and demonstrate the American and coalition preparedness to use force.

### Constraints

The political context was derived from the policy positions and reactions to the use of force in a number of key states. The list included those states that played host to coalition forces (Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey), the members of the coalition, and the UNSC. International law was another constraint. The military constraints that limited the options for action

<sup>19</sup> DoS DPB, 12 January 1993, p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> DoS DPB, 7 January 1993, p. 15.



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included intelligence, the availability and limitations of the coalition's in-theatre assets.

The coalition enjoyed the support of the Gulf States at the outset of the crisis, and this was largely due to the attempt to find non-violent solutions before the use of force. Saudi papers contained criticism of Saddam Hussein's regime and its disregard for the UN.<sup>21</sup> Naturally, the Kuwaiti government was the most supportive, as it perceived a direct threat from the Iraqi actions with regard to the DMZ.<sup>22</sup> Both the Saudi and Kuwaiti media showed more concern over the border violations than other issues.

All the coalition members agreed that force was to be employed as a last resort. While still the President-Elect, Bill Clinton strongly supported the Bush Administration's approach to the crisis.<sup>23</sup> This endorsement prevented the use of force from becoming a domestic political issue, potentially affecting the decision of when and how force should be employed. The British government also saw the Iraqi actions as threatening and defiant, and was prepared to use force if required.<sup>24</sup> The French government showed itself to be like-minded. A French communiqué dated 14 January 1993 stated that: 'The refusal of Iraq, in spite of the warnings, to comply with our demands has brought the allies to intervene.'<sup>25</sup> While the coalition felt the need to deal harshly with Iraq, it hoped that this would be unnecessary.

Most UNSC members, including the Russian Federation, found the coalition's initial approach acceptable. The Russian government shared the view that Iraq's actions posed a problem. Its Foreign Ministry stated that:

<sup>21</sup> 'Press Views Iraqi Violations on Border', 12 January 1993, FBIS-NES-93-007.

<sup>22</sup> S. Bhatia, 'Saddam's bulldozers flatten UN', *Observer*, 17 January 1993, and 'Kuwait Puts Air Force On Alert', *IHT*, 8 January 1993.

<sup>23</sup> 'US Press Release: Iraq Warned to Stop Harassment of U.N. Operations, 28 December 1992', in Weller, Ed., p. 733.

<sup>24</sup> 'Interview with Malcolm Rifkind, UK Secretary of State for Defence, BBC Radio 4, on 8 January 1993', in Weller, Ed., p. 735.



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'Russia had repeatedly, i.a. [sic] through her Embassy in Baghdad, urged the Iraqi side to display wisdom and readiness to cooperate with the UN Security Council, to refrain from steps leading to escalation of tension in the region.'<sup>26</sup> Iraq's actions in the DMZ and its lack of co-operation aroused the ire of the Council.<sup>27</sup> The Council wanted the crisis and the tensions to end quickly, thus ensuring support for the demarche. This widespread consensus about the use of force as a last resort encompassed the view that any use of force should not be disproportionate and acted as a powerful restraint on the coalition.

There were three legal issues during this crisis. First, the question of Iraq's right to enforce its sovereignty by challenging the forces over the NFZs led to the possibility that force might be used in addition to the erosion of Iraqi sovereignty. The international community seemed to feel that the situation warranted both. Second, Iraq's actions with regard to UNSCOM and the DMZ were clear violations of SCR 687. By refusing to move the police posts, the Iraqi government tried to influence UNIKBDC's demarcation of the land boundary. The seizure of the Silkworm missiles and the pre-fabricated buildings at the former naval base in Umm Qasr by Iraqi nationals were a violation of the sanctions and the arms embargo. Last, the refusal to allow UNSCOM's overflights was a breach of SCR 687.<sup>28</sup> Violations were punishable by force. However, it is at least arguable that by a quirk of the wording of the relevant resolutions, aircraft that flew over Iraq

<sup>25</sup> 'Press statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France, 14 January 1993', in Weller, Ed., p. 744.

<sup>26</sup> 'Press Release: Statement by the Russian Foreign Ministry, 14 January 1993', in Weller, Ed., p. 745.

<sup>27</sup> 'Statement by the President of the Security Council concerning United Nations flights into Iraqi territory', S/25081 (8 January 1993), UN, pp. 512-513, and 'Statement by the President of the Security Council concerning various actions by Iraq vis-à-vis UNIKOM and UNSCOM', S/25091 (11 January 1993), UN, p. 516.

<sup>28</sup> For a list of the agreements, see: 'Report of the Executive Chairman of UNSCOM transmitting an account of the Commission's operations in connection with the events since Iraq first informed the Commission that the Commission would not be allowed to use its aircraft to transport personnel and equipment into Iraq', S/25172 (29 January 1993), UN, p. 520.



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had the positive right to engage if violations of the resolutions were manifest, but strictly had no right to be there until infringements had in fact occurred.

Previous Iraqi actions had left the coalition with the sense that only its observable actions had any value. This meant that a premium was placed on the availability and accuracy of intelligence upon which to base any assessment of the situation. With the demarche, SAMs were the chosen targets as their movements were measurable.<sup>29</sup> However, there were some practical difficulties posed by the inclement weather over southern Iraq that month, as the measurement was contingent upon the coalition's ability to detect the missiles.<sup>30</sup> In short, neither the tactical reconnaissance aircraft nor the satellites were able to provide the required information, thus imposing a limitation on the attempt at coercion. The deadline came and went without action. Two days later however, the American government was able to verify the Iraqi claim and noted that the missiles were moving out of the SNFZ.<sup>31</sup> However, as Iraqi activities decreased in the SNFZ, they increased in the NNFZ. Thus activity in the two no-fly zones had to be considered in conjunction with one another. This synoptic view became the determinant of the coalition's actions during the crisis.

### Means and Target Sets

With the assets already in theatre, the coalition could employ air power (from its bases in Saudi Arabia or from the deck of the USS Kitty Hawk) and/or unmanned assets. The latter meant that the use of T-LAMs, but the option of using air assets from 'over-the-horizon' to deliver air-launched cruise missiles still existed. There was, however, a problem with the use of unmanned power. The US military initially rejected the option of an unmanned strike. Unmanned strikes were seen as inflexible because the range of target options was limited due to the time it would require to program the

<sup>29</sup> D. Fairhall, 'Character of raid dictated by politics', *Guardian*, 14 January 1993.

<sup>30</sup> *DoS DPB*, 8 January 1993, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> In 'White House Statement on Iraq, 9 January 1993', in Weller, Ed., p. 736.



missile guidance computers, and their use excluded the other members of the coalition.<sup>32</sup> This was a powerful incentive to opt for a manned strike.

**Table 7: Assets in Theatre**

Location	US	UK	France
Incirlik AB	38 x F-15E, F-16, F-4G	6 x Jaguar	8 x Mirage F-1
Riyadh	2 x E-3 12 x KC-135, KC-10		
Mushayt	20 x F-117		
Taif	1 or 2 x U-2 2 x JSTARS		
Dhahran	20 x F-15E, C 20 x F-16 20 x A-10 20 x F-4G 6 x EF-111	6 x Tornado GR-1 2 x Victor	10 x Mirage F-1 1 x KC-135
Persian Gulf	USS Kitty Hawk (includes 70 x F/A-18, F-14, E-2C, EA-6B, A-6E) USS Leahy USS Worden USS Cowpens USS Hewitt USS Stump USS Jarrett USS Roberts	HMS London HMS Nottingham	

So what target sets could be used to coerce Iraq? Given the political limitations, the coalition was left with four basic options. It could strike Iraqi airfields to impede the IQAF from flying but the majority of the active IQAF airfields were north of the 32nd parallel. The coalition could also attack Iraqi army assets in southern Iraq, but the mandate for such action was questionable given that the raid on Umm Qasr was conducted by a 'mob' as

<sup>32</sup> CIS S201-2, p. 66. The flexibility issue raises the question of whether or not the T-LAMs were not used initially in order to maintain a tool of escalation in case that air strikes failed.



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opposed to an identifiable military organisation. This option was also closed. Similarly, the coalition could strike at a WMD facility, but this did not address the coalition's problem with the SNFZ. Attacking air defences, on the other hand, would demonstrate resolve and take greater steps toward force protection for the JTF-SWA.

The coalition could also deploy forces to the region. In this case, the deployment would reinforce the Kuwaiti armed forces as well as to implicitly threaten the use of ground forces in support of UNIKOM. The crisis created a political and military opportunity for the US government. Not only would it show the Gulf States that the US would bring ground forces to the region quickly in times of crisis, but the US military could practice doing so. To that end, a battalion-sized task force from the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division started to deploy on 13 January 1993.<sup>33</sup>

### Analysis

The air strikes on 13 January 1993 were launched against four SAM batteries, two of which were near Basra and two were near Nasariyah, as well as four fixed C3I and radar sites at An Najaf, Samawah, Tallil and Al-Amarah.<sup>34</sup> The strike aircraft were supported by a massive array of aircraft and were flying at around 9,000 feet due to the Iraqi SAMs.<sup>35</sup> The strikes were launched at night to minimise the risk of casualties. The JCS stated to the Senate Armed Services Committee that:

<sup>33</sup> 'Allied Warplanes Hit Iraqi Missile Sites', *IIIT*, 14 January 1993.

<sup>34</sup> White, p. 23.

<sup>35</sup> *CIS S201-2*, pp. 67-68.



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... we conducted air strikes to neutralise the air defence sector which was controlled from An Najat down to Samawah, at Tallil and back to Al Amarah, basically the air defence and control network has to run his air defence system in the southern no-fly zone, as well as go after these SA-3 missiles that were still operationally deployed ...<sup>36</sup>

The intent was to render the southern air defence sector inoperable. The strikes were supposed to occur on 12 January, but weather delayed it a day.<sup>37</sup> Iraq's actions in the DMZ were the catalyst for action. The strikes were intended to be a message to the Iraqi government and a means of force protection. The CINC stated that: 'There were two purposes to the strikes. One, to end the provocations by significantly reducing their capability ... and two, to indicate to them that we were prepared to strike them militarily.'<sup>38</sup> However, the choice of the target sets suggested that force protection was more important than Iraqi compliance. This came with the unintended consequence of reducing the credibility of future threats.

The results of the strike were not as devastating as desired. The initial BDA revealed the existence of a number of problems and errors linked to weather and technical problems.<sup>39</sup> Of the SAM batteries, only one was destroyed, and the other two were ordered to disperse.<sup>40</sup> The results of the fixed targets were not much better. At Al Amarah, some radar and buildings were damaged, and Samawah experienced some damage to its radar, while at Tallil, there was some moderate damage to some buildings, and the

<sup>36</sup> CIS S201-9, pp. 49. For a list of participating aircraft, see: P. Almond, 'Weather caused targeting problems', DT, 15 January 1993, J. Boatman and P. Beaver, 'Coalition draws new line in the sand', IDW, 23 January 1993, D. Fulghum, 'Allies Strike Iraq For Defying U.N.', Aviation Weekly Science & Technology (Henceforth AWST), 18 January 1993, G. Joffe, 'The Allied Attacks', MEI, 2 February 1993.

<sup>37</sup> Hoar, cited in Fulghum, 'Allies'.

<sup>38</sup> Hoar Interview, p. 3.

<sup>39</sup> P. Almond, 'Weather caused targeting problems', DT, 15 January 1993, and D. Fulghum, 'Pentagon Criticizes Air Strike on Iraq', AWST, 25 January 1993.

<sup>40</sup> Boatman and Beaver.



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communications and radar systems there were destroyed.<sup>41</sup> The damage was not seen to be sufficient, and proved to be somewhat controversial. Brent Scowcroft, President Bush's National Security Advisor, acknowledged that the strike was not as effective as was anticipated, but this was irrelevant because the intent of the strike was to send a message to Baghdad.<sup>42</sup> This message indicated that Iraq had a choice; it could either accept the SNFZ existed and coalition aircraft would be present, or it could fight a defensive counter-air campaign with little prospect of victory. The Iraqi government chose to transfer the problem elsewhere. One of the American Joint Staff noted that, after the 13 January strike, there was: '... a significant increase of events to the north. We had British, French and U.S. aircraft, and all received instances of AAA fire. Fortunately, none of the aircraft were hit. We also saw Saddam begin to deploy his aircraft and violate in a rather routine way the 36 no-fly zone with aircraft . . .'.<sup>43</sup> Within days, the Iraqi government began to offer limited concessions by allowing UNSCOM to fly into Iraqi airspace if there were no coalition aircraft in Iraqi airspace at the same time. The UN's historical account stated that:

On 16 January, Iraq offered to ensure the safety of UNSCOM flights, but only if they entered Iraqi airspace from Jordanian airspace. UNSCOM responded that it did not have the operational capability to re-route its flights through Jordanian airspace and reminded Iraq of its obligations to cooperate with UNSCOM. While continuing to block all UNSCOM flights, Iraq stated on 17 January that UNSCOM aircraft could enter Iraqi airspace from Bahrain if UNSCOM ensured that no aircraft of the coalition States flew in the no-fly zones over Iraq whenever UNSCOM aircraft were in Iraqi airspace.<sup>44</sup>

The Iraqi government was prepared to accede to the demands under SCR 687, but were not prepared to give up the right to defend their sovereignty

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., Fulghum, 'Allies', and D. Fulghum, 'Pentagon Criticizes Air Strike on Iraq', *AWST*, 25 January 1993.

<sup>42</sup> Fulghum, 'Allies'.

<sup>43</sup> *CIS S201-2*, p. 49.

<sup>44</sup> *UN*, pp. 86-87.



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in its entirety. The results obtained were therefore equivocal: the Iraqi government offered concessions as if haggling, but these fell short of the coalition's expectations and came with unacceptable conditions.

The results of the strike posed problems within the coalition. Each of the national contingents maintained an intelligence assessment capability, leading to differences in the perception of the situation. One account noted that the French and American assessments of the damage varied by thirty percent. The American assessment maintained that approximately 50% of the targets had been destroyed, whereas the French assessment maintained that 80% of the targets had been destroyed.<sup>45</sup> This contributed to the French perception of the later strikes being unnecessary or disproportionate. Thus, the BDA was important as it determined the coalition's choices of actions after 13 January.

The ambiguous results of the 13 January strike led to escalation. This was intended as a 'message': if Iraq failed to cooperate with UNSCOM, the coalition would disarm Iraq by force. On 17 January 1993, three US warships in the Gulf, the USS Cowpens, the USS Hewitt, the USS Stump, and one in the Red Sea, USS Caron, launched a series of Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles (T-LAMs) at the Zaafaraniyah Advanced Engineering Facility, a nuclear factory located in suburban Baghdad.<sup>46</sup> A Department of State spokesman stated that: '... it is near Baghdad and makes the point to the people of the country as well as to the government that we are willing to enforce the resolution ... it also helps in the process of eliminating nuclear weapons in the sense of the destructive act itself ...'<sup>47</sup> This target symbolised Iraq's lack of compliance with SCR 687. Striking such a significant target made clear

<sup>45</sup> M. Evans and J. Dettmer, 'Allied planes assess damage after hits on half of Iraqi targets', *Times*, 15 January 1993.

<sup>46</sup> R. Beeston, and M. Fletcher, 'US fires 40 cruise missiles at Baghdad nuclear weapons site', *Times*, 18 January 1993, and D. Usborne and R. Fisk, 'US fires missiles at Baghdad factory', *Independent*, 18 January 1993.

<sup>47</sup> 'US Press Release: Attack Shows U.S. Fully Backs U.N. Iraq Mandate, 17 January 1993', in Weller, Ed., p. 747.



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coalition readiness to escalate its action beyond the no-fly zones and underscored its determination to see Iraq comply with the full letter of the UN resolutions.

This was the Iraqi government's second choice. It could be disarmed forcibly or peacefully. The former would be somewhat reminiscent of DESERT STORM except that the coalition had improved its knowledge and understanding of the Iraqi WMD arsenal. Such a penalty, combined with the belief that UNSCOM could be deceived into unwittingly allowing a residual WMD capability to exist, led the Iraqi government to opt for peaceful and possibly limited disarmament.

The decision to use T-LAMs as a 'messenger' was based on two factors. One, the target was in Baghdad, an area of Iraq that was well defended against air attack. This made surprise important, which meant the use of either T-LAMs or F-117s. T-LAMs were selected instead of F-117s as was explained to the media by an American spokesperson: 'The main reason is that we wanted to use the missiles because it did not put U.S. personnel in jeopardy. It did not - we did not have to use aircraft. We did not have to suffer the risk of having personnel go down.'<sup>48</sup> Two, the relative accuracy of T-LAMs made them a useful tool to use on facilities in built-up areas, as they offered the promise of minimal collateral damage. During this strike, 45 missiles were fired, and only 37 reached the target. Six of the other missiles fell within the target complex, or in a nearby orchard, without hitting their aimpoints. Another missile's booster engine failed, and it plunged into the sea, and the final missile, which is thought to have been hit by flak, hit the Rashid hotel, where it burnt instead of detonating.<sup>49</sup> This was an embarrassment for the US, as there were civilian casualties, giving the Iraqi

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 747. T-LAMs used a low altitude approach as opposed to a medium altitude approach used by the 13 January strikes. See: C. Bellamy, "Kamikaze" missiles reduce risks', *Independent*, 18 January 1993.

<sup>49</sup> *CIS S201-2*, pp. 67-69.



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government a means to gain international sympathy.<sup>50</sup> UNSCOM provided BDA by inspecting the Zaafaraniyah facility at a later date, they discovered that the tools used in the factory for the production of nuclear equipment were absolutely destroyed.<sup>51</sup> The strike suggested that there was a forceful means of removing Iraq's WMDs.

The coalition sent another package of aircraft on 18 January to finish off the targets that had not been destroyed or sufficiently damaged by the first strike.<sup>52</sup> This time, the weather was more forgiving, and the strike was conducted by daylight to maximise their ability to acquire the targets.<sup>53</sup> This showed that the air defence threat had been sufficiently reduced so as to warrant the risk of a daylight attack. Further damage to the sector was merely a means of reinforcing the message.

The diplomatic reactions to the strikes were mixed. The reactions of the regional allies were inherently tied to their own perceptions of the Iraqi threat, which explains the unequivocal support from the Turkish and Kuwaiti governments, and the less enthusiastic support from the others. The UNSC and even the UN Secretariat were consistent in their support for the actions, but there was also a growing concern about the possible increase in tension in the Middle East as a whole. Within the coalition, there remained lurking the potentially serious issue of disagreement about the force of the application of the relevant UN resolutions. The French government maintained the view that the resolutions did not diminish Iraqi sovereignty beyond the strict terms of their application. The American and British government, on the other hand, took a much wider view, interpreting the focus of the resolutions to be

<sup>50</sup> R. Beeston, 'Foreigners' hotel damage in raid', *Times*, 18 January 1993, and J. Whittington, 'Conflict With Iraq: Damage goes on display in Baghdad', *FT*, 19 January 1993.

<sup>51</sup> 'Status on Iraq', *CIS H380-15*, 22 March 1993, p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> For details, see: R. Beeston, 'Daylight raids destroy radar centres', *Times*, 19 January 1993, J. Boatman and P. Beaver, 'Coalition draws new line in the sand', *JDW*, 23 January 1993, M. Gordon, 'Raids in 2 Regions', *NYT*, 19 January 1993, and 'Statement in the House of Commons by the UK Secretary of State for Defence, 18 January 1993', in Weller, Ed., p. 748. See above, p. 118.

<sup>53</sup> *CIS S201-2*, pp. 69-70.



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the larger issue of Iraq's position vis-à-vis the Middle East as a whole and consequently offered much wider authorities.

The political reactions of the regional allies were determined by the degree to which they perceived a threat emanating from Iraq. Examples of this were provided by the Turkish and Kuwaiti governments. The Kuwaiti government, as in every other crisis, was co-operative throughout, as anything that weakened Iraq was seen as naturally strengthening Kuwait's security. The Turkish government did not necessarily share this narrow view of its security with regard to Iraq. Given its perception of PROVIDE COMFORT II, where the operation was the means of preventing further incursions by Kurdish refugees, threats to the existence of the NNFZ guaranteed that the Turkish government would support offensive operations against Iraq.<sup>54</sup> The Saudi Arabian press supported the idea of striking at Saddam Hussein's regime, arguing that UN SCRs had to be respected, whether pertaining to the Gulf, Israel or Bosnia.<sup>55</sup> This was the only time in the history of SOUTHERN WATCH that the Saudi government allowed force to be used from their bases.<sup>56</sup>

Other states were concerned that further uses of force would bring an unwelcome increase in tensions in the Middle East. The Chinese government's position was the best example. It stated: 'We do not wish to see further deterioration of situation in the Gulf region. Our consistent position is to peacefully settle international disputes.'<sup>57</sup> This acted as a powerful incentive to ensure that future attempts at coercion would be gradual and proportionate. Such strategies seek to use the minimum level of force

<sup>54</sup> See: 'Demirel Discusses Iraq, Incirlik', 19 January 1993, FBIS-WEU-93-011, and 'Foreign Ministry Issues Statement', 17 January 1993, FBIS-WEU-93-011.

<sup>55</sup> See: 'Councils Stresses Respect for All UN Resolutions', 19 January 1993, FBIS-NES-93-010, 'Papers Call For Overthrow of Iraq's Saddam', 19 January 1993, FBIS-NES-93-010, and 'Papers Support Air Strike Against Iraq', 19 January 1993, FBIS-NES-93-010.

<sup>56</sup> White, p. 26.

<sup>57</sup> Reply by Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman, 18 January 1993', in Weller, Ed., p. 749.



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possible and escalate only when it is clear that a greater degree of force is required. This has the advantage of keeping tensions lower than with other strategies of coercion.

The British and French governments initially criticised the strike on Zaafaraniyah. Such statements were intended to distance the two governments from the strike and appease the Middle East. Both were quick to note that only the US had T-LAMs, the means of striking Zaafaraniyah.<sup>58</sup> Soon after, the French government implied that it was opposed only to the T-LAM strikes because it believed that the strikes lacked UNSC authorisation.<sup>59</sup>

The French reaction to the strikes was irrevocably tied to the legal issues that surrounded both the T-LAM and air strikes of 18 January. In their interpretation, SCR 687 defined the existence of a cease-fire, and in the absence of a provocation, striking Zaafaraniyah was illegal. The other raids, the French government claimed, were justified under the terms of SCR 688 and the implied right to self-defence of coalition patrols over the SNFZ.<sup>60</sup>

The UN Secretary General, Boaters Boaters-Ghali, and the UNSC believed that the 13 January series of strikes fell under the aegis of SCR 687 because their aim was to modify Iraqi behaviour to obtain compliance with the resolution.<sup>61</sup> The US government argued that the strikes were justified under an even earlier resolution. The State Department claimed that:

<sup>58</sup> 'Doorstep Interview with the UK Prime Minister, Wednesday, 20 January 1993', in Weller, Ed., p. 751, 'Point de Presse du ministre d'État, ministre des Affaires étrangères, M. Roland Dumas, à l'issue de son audition devant la Commission des Affaires étrangères de l'Assemblée nationale', *La Politique Étrangère de la France: Textes et Documents*, January-February 1993, pp. 45-46.

<sup>59</sup> 'Official Declaration issued by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of France, 21 January 1993', in Weller, Ed., p. 752.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 752.

<sup>61</sup> CISH380-10, p. 2, 'UN gives official backing after ceasefire violations', *Guardian*, 15 January 1993, and 'Written Answers', 15 January 1993, *Hansard*, 6<sup>th</sup> Series, Vol. 216, Columns 855-856 written.



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The statement [by President Bush] determines the Iraqi actions -- that is, on two counts: the incursions and on the prohibition of flights by UNSCOM -- constitute material breaches of Resolution 687, which established the cease-fire and provided the conditions essential for the restoration of peace and security in the region, and it warned Iraq of the serious consequences that will flow from continued defiance of the Council . . . The statement lays the foundation for action by the Council or Member states that co-operated with Kuwait in accordance with Resolution 678 to respond to violations of the sort addressed by the Council in the statement. The possible use of force is not excluded.<sup>62</sup>

Marlin Fitzwater claimed that: 'The strike was designed to help . . . ensure that Iraq never again acquires weapons of mass destruction...', and he claimed that the strike was justified under the terms of SCRs 687, 707 and 715.<sup>63</sup> This reflected the greater goal - to obtain complete compliance. Both the British and French governments later agreed that the 13 January action was justified under the terms of SCRs 678 and 687.<sup>64</sup> This justification avoided the issue of Iraqi sovereignty by invoking the vaguely worded clauses about threats to regional peace and security. If it was the case that both NFZs were illegal due to a lack of 'positive' authorisation, then the provisions for self-defence under Article 51 of the UN would apply to Iraq's forces only.

There were two schools of thought on the legality of the T-LAM strike. One position, echoed by the French foreign minister, was based on the assumption that while Iraq's actions were undesirable, they did not necessarily constitute a breach of SCR 687. The American government, however, believed that Iraq's actions were a breach, and remained so until Iraq began to comply. The British Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, sustained the argument in his statement before the House of Commons on 18 January 1993

<sup>62</sup> DoS DPB, 12 January 1993, p. 10. This was due to threats to the forces of the JIT-SWA.

<sup>63</sup> 'US Press Release: Attack Shows U.S. Fully Backs U.N. Iraq Mandate, 17 January 1993', in Weller, Ed., p. 746.

<sup>64</sup> 'Press statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France, 14 January 1993', and 'Statement by the UK Secretary of State for Defence, 13 January 1993', in Weller, Ed., pp. 738 and 744.



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that the French argument was weak at best, as the American position had been validated by warnings given to Iraq by the UNSC. Referring to the use of T-LAMs, he stated: 'This action was taken to ensure that Iraq complies with its mandatory obligations under UNSCR 687 and related resolutions. Iraq has committed a number of material breaches of UNSCR 687 and wilfully ignored the warnings given by the Security Council and the US, UK, France and Russia on 11 and 14 January respectively.'<sup>65</sup> Such warnings were intended to notify the Iraqi government that it remained in breach of SCR 687 until it complied. At the same time, they were also intended to signal the coalition's readiness to listen to Iraqi offer of concessions. This weakened the French legal argument, and it can be inferred that the subsequent French statements were for political purposes.

What concessions were made by the Iraqi government and why? Naturally, it sought to give as little as possible, and its concessions came in a series of limited offers. The concessions offered were very specific, and reflected a desire not to allow any further deterioration of the Iraqi military machine. On 17 January 1993, the Iraqi government announced that the police posts in the DMZ would be withdrawn. Within two days, the forts were gone.<sup>66</sup> The second concession may not necessarily have been prompted by the strikes. The Iraqi government declared a unilateral cease-fire on 20 January in order to allow the incoming Clinton Administration to assess the situation and create a 'constructive dialogue'.<sup>67</sup> The Iraqi overture was based on the widespread perception of the incoming Administration. Tim Trevan noted that:

<sup>65</sup> 'Statement in the House of Commons by the UK Secretary of State for Defence, 18 January 1993', in Weller, Ed., p. 748.

<sup>66</sup> 'Addendum (S/25085/Add.1, 19 January 1993)', UN, p. 515, and 'Security Council resolution concerning the work of the Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Demarcation Commission', S/RES/773 (1992), 26 August 1992, UN, p. 473.

<sup>67</sup> 'Statement issued by the Revolution Command Council of the Republic of Iraq, 19 January 1993', in Weller, Ed., pp. 750-751. The incoming Administration rejected it outright. See: DoS DPB, 21 January 1993, p. 9.



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Soon after his election in November 1992 to the US Presidency, Bill Clinton was asked what he thought of Saddam Hussein . . . In particular, Clinton said that, as a southern Baptist, he believed in deathbed conversions: he hoped he could reason with Saddam Hussein. Those of us with first-hand experience of Saddam's regime knew that this would be misinterpreted. It would not be taken as the philosophical musings of a new President wishing to be loved by everyone, but rather as a sign of weakness to be exploited.<sup>68</sup>

President Clinton's initial conciliatory approach offered Iraq at least the possibility of complying with UN resolutions with minimal loss of face. That they did not seize this opportunity had two effects, both of them unfortunate. It cast doubt upon the approach that conciliation was the best way forward for the new administration and thus closed it off as a viable policy option. Second, the lost opportunity directly paved the way toward the 'Dual Containment' policy adopted by President Clinton's administration later in 1993.

The NFZs remained tranquil until 22 January, when there was a brief series of incidents involving SAMs and illumination, but after that, both became dormant.<sup>69</sup> The DMZ also became tranquil.<sup>70</sup> With regard to UNSCOM, it must be noted that the Iraqi government offered very specific concessions. On 19 January, it removed its objections to allowing UNSCOM's transit over Iraqi airspace.<sup>71</sup> That was the limit. It failed to accept the plans as mandated by SCR 715, and continued to complain about the overflights by U-2s in support of UNSCOM.<sup>72</sup> The use of force convinced the Iraqi government to comply at least partially to SCR 687 and its antecedents and to stop resisting (at least actively) the SNFZ enforcement.

<sup>68</sup> Trevan, *Secrets*, p. 203.

<sup>69</sup> *CIS S201-9*, p. 51.

<sup>70</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on UNIKOM for the period from 1 October 1992 to 31 March 1993', S/25514, 2 April 1993, *UN*, p. 529.

<sup>71</sup> *UN*, p. 86.



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January 1993 represented the first real attempt at the coercion of Iraq. The Iraqi government was presented with two choices. It could cooperate with UNSCOM (and possibly reduce the damage through deception) or be forcibly disarmed as was demonstrated by the 17 January missile strikes. It could either tolerate the SNFZ or have to fight for the control of its airspace as its air defences and assets were subjected to attrition by the forces of the JTF-SWA. None of the choices could be described as particularly attractive from the Iraqi point of view, as the choice represented disarmament and a loss of sovereignty with or without violence.

The state of communications between the coalition and Iraq was fair at best. It appears that the Iraqi government did not believe the original ultimatum was anything either than a bargaining position, and offered limited concessions in a form of haggling. The coalition, on the other hand, issued definite ultimatums and applied force when compliance was not forthcoming. The Iraqi reaction was to make placating statements while shifting the conflict to other venues (i.e. to UNIKOM or the NNFZ). It was not until the missile strike against the Zaafaraniyah nuclear facility that the Iraqi government capitulated and accepted that a provocative approach was not going to bear fruit.

The coalition's actions, particularly the missile strike, somewhat increased the coalition's credibility in terms of its threats. While the coalition demonstrated that it could and would attack Iraq in order to match threats with actions, it demonstrated a definite desire to protect its forces. The use of manned air implies the acceptance of risk by the coercer, but that the suppression of enemy air defences implies a concern over casualties. This suggested that an Iraqi casualty-causing strategy would pay off eventually.

<sup>72</sup> Third report of the Secretary-General on the status of the implementation of the plan for the ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraq's compliance with relevant parts of section C of the Security Council resolution 687 (1991)', S/25620, 19 April 1993, UN, pp. 531-535.



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Iraq's willpower was not easily eroded during this operation. The timing of the operation (just days before the inauguration of President Clinton) was one reason, but the dispute between the French and American governments presented an image of disunity. This offered the Iraqi government some hope. However, this eroded significantly with the prospect of forcible disarmament and its isolation. This isolation led to Iraq's speedy indication of its willingness to negotiate. The Iraqi government also learned that the coalition was capable of striking targets in suburban Baghdad and was prepared to fight for control of the SNFZ. The coalition's choice of target sets was a reaction to Iraq's provocations, and while the coalition derived some benefit from attacking Iraqi air defences, it is possible that the Iraqi government was able to justify its actions in terms of an ongoing conflict. The nuclear facility was a significant target for two reasons: it was a WMD facility in Baghdad. This created a great deal of pain. The loss of the facility by force was a far worse option than the presence of inspectors.

This was a case where threat-based coercion failed and force-based coercion eventually succeeded. The original ultimatum did not bring about anything but the removal of the SAMs from the SNFZ, but even this was limited as additional missiles were moved into the NNFZ. The coalition escalated by striking air defence assets in the SNFZ on 13 January, and this failed to cause the Iraqi government to offer concessions. The coalition escalated by attacking the Zaafaraniyah facility, and this escalated use of force led to immediate concessions. The incremental approach eventually led to meaningful results.

### Conclusion

The coalition proceeded on a worst case scenario. Their policy base rested on a number of linked pillars held together by the nexus of UNSCRs. First, Kuwait had to be secure. Second, Iraq had to comply in full with the resolutions. Third, Iraq was not to be subjected to such military depredation that the security of the Middle East region was put at untenable risk. This led



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to an incremental approach to the problem, but given the overarching policy umbrella it was an approach in which one step could be followed closely by others as the situation demanded.

The incremental approach was also important for a number of other reasons. First, measured rather than all out response was, at least arguably, consonant with the wording of the UNSCRs in effect. It followed that dissenting views, for example by the French government, but also in more veiled terms by the Russian and the Chinese governments, could be dealt with within an existing diplomatic framework. Second, an incremental approach was consonant with public opinion, particularly within the United States. The major phases of the Gulf War had been accomplished without major coalition casualties. That set a parameter for other tranches of action. Third, incremental action minimised risks associated with imperfect understanding of Iraqi action. Fourth, incremental action offered the limitation of action to military targets with minimal risk of collateral damage and civilian casualties – a consequence that would have been hard for the coalition in public relations terms.

Thus was the scenario set within the coalition for a process of escalating action according to result and response. The lessons learned were that incremental response is effective, but that a first level response might be insufficient. The new Clinton Administration learned that dialogue was insufficient when military action has already been advanced by the opposing side and has not yet been faced down. It was a lesson in hard realities.

*Still weak analysis*



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The Iraqi government deployed elements of the RGFC in southern Iraq in October 1994. It is not completely clear what the Iraqi government was trying to do, but the deployment coincided with a sudden burst of hostile rhetoric demanding a lifting of sanctions. The coalition believed that Iraq sought to invade Kuwait again, and responded by sending additional ground and air forces to the Persian Gulf in Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR in order to demonstrate its resolve. There were additional political complications, such as the dispute that developed between Clinton Administration and key figures in the French government, and the Russian government's attempt to influence the eventual outcome of the crisis. By November 1994, this led to the Iraqi government's recognition of Kuwait. VIGILANT WARRIOR was a strategic success despite the fact that it may not be possible to deem it a successful attempt at deterrence.

#### Chronology

5 October 1994	JTF-SWA aircraft detected the deployment of elements of the RGFC to southern Iraq.
8 October 1994	The President authorised the deployment of forces to the Persian Gulf region.
9 October 1994	Iraqi forces north of the DMZ established logistical bases.
10 October 1994	The Iraqi government ordered its forces to withdraw from southern Iraq.
12 October 1994	Talks between the Russian and Iraqi governments began. The Iraqi government announced it had



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	completed the withdrawal from southern Iraq. The 'Ground Exclusion Zone' plan was suggested by the US Secretary of Defense, William Perry.
15 October 1994	The UNSC passed SCR 949, demanding that Iraq not deploy any further forces to southern Iraq.
7 November 1994	The coalition began to withdraw its reinforcements from the region.
10 November 1994	The Iraqi government announced that it would recognise Kuwait.

### Catalyst/Cause for Coercion

The crisis was caused by the Iraqi government's adoption of aggressive tactics in October 1994. During 1993 and 1994, the Iraqi government had been more co-operative with the UN and UNSCOM, but in the autumn of 1994, its behaviour changed significantly. The American government saw this as the prelude to another invasion of Kuwait.

From February 1993 through to September 1994, the Iraqi government had been somewhat co-operative and the UN became optimistic about the situation. The Secretary-General reported in early October 1994 that significant progress had been made over the summer, and that there was reason to be optimistic about the future.<sup>1</sup> The situation was sufficiently stable that the Clinton Administration, with some prompting from the Saudi government, sought to reduce the size of its commitment to the JTF-SWA.<sup>2</sup> Such optimism was misplaced, as the Iraqi economy was in awful shape because the annual inflation rate was 1000%, the Iraqi dinar was nearly

<sup>1</sup> See: 'Sixth report of the Secretary-General on the status of the implementation of the plan for the ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraq's compliance with relevant parts of section C of Security Council resolution 687 (1991)', S/1994/1138 (7 October 1994), UN, pp. 665-684.

<sup>2</sup> Platte interview, pp. 1 and 3.



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valueless and rations had been cut by at least one third.<sup>3</sup> The Iraqi government stated only days later that it would not cooperate or even deal with the UN unless economic sanctions were lifted.<sup>4</sup> The Iraqi government apparently believed that if it brought pressure to bear, the UN would give in. There were precedents supporting this belief, such as the UN's inaction in Rwanda, as well as affairs in Somalia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. In early October, the tone of Iraqi radio broadcasts changed. In a letter to the UNSC, the Kuwaiti government complained that an Iraqi News Agency radio broadcast issued veiled threats towards Kuwait, where it was stated that:

. . . the leadership in Iraq, in accordance with its constitutional and moral responsibilities, has no option but to prepare a new position that will - straighten out matters and free the Iraqi people of the ordeal that has been imposed on them . . . we will wait until 10 October 1994, and then everyone will bear responsibility for their own position . . .<sup>5</sup>

Elements of the RGFC moved into southern Iraq soon after. To the coalition, this appeared to be eerily similar to Iraq's behaviour in late July of 1990.

While the coalition could draw analogies to the prelude to the August 1990 invasion of Iraq, its members were better prepared. First, the JTF-SWA's reconnaissance flights in the SNFZ revealed that some of the Republican Guard units deployed north of Baghdad were moving south. The presence of the JTF-SWA enabled the detection of major Iraqi military deployments. There were elements of the '*Hammurabi*' and the '*Al Nida*' RGFC divisions deployed in or moving to southern Iraq. Another division,

<sup>3</sup> White, p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> See: B. Crossette, 'Iraqi Denounces Sanctions', *NYT*, 8 October 1994, and 'Iraq says no', *Guardian*, 5 October 1994.

<sup>5</sup> 'Leadership Sets 10 Oct Deadline on Sanctions', FBIS-NES 94-194, 6 October 1994, p. 12, and 'Letter dated 6 October 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the UN addressed to the President of the Security Council', S/1994/1137 (6 October 1994), pp. 1 and 3.



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the '*Adnan*', appeared to be deploying in depth.<sup>6</sup> On 5 October, RAF GR-1 Tornados reported trains off-loading the equipment of the three RGFC divisions at a railyard only a few kilometres west of Basra.<sup>7</sup> This was sufficient to have the DoD direct more intelligence resources and assets in order to develop a better picture of the situation on 6 October 1994.<sup>8</sup> This led eventually to the fastest deployment of land forces over the greatest distance in military history.

### Constraints

The implied aggression inherent in Iraq's actions guaranteed a substantial degree of support for the coalition to use force. The coalition's members all agreed that action was necessary, and so did the GCC states. However, given the forces in theatre and the perceived nature of the threat, it was impossible to act without reinforcements. Previously optimistic about Iraq's progress, the UN recoiled with horror at the Iraqi provocations.

The American government quickly drew a link between the Iraqi statements and troop movement, and condemned both. For example, the White House Spokesman, Mike McCurry, commented that:

Iraq's threats to cease co-operation with the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM), and hints of use of force in the event sanctions against Iraq are not promptly lifted, underscore the importance of the Security Council's being assured of Iraq's peaceful intentions before considering to lift the sanctions regime. To achieve the lifting of sanctions, Iraq must comply fully with all U.N. Security Council resolutions. Confrontational tactics will prove no more successful now than in the past.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> M. Gordon, 'Pentagon Moving A Force of 4,000 to Guard Kuwait', *NYT*, 9 October 1994, and M. Gordon, 'U.S. Sends Force As Iraqi Soldiers Threaten Kuwait', *NYT*, 8 October 1994.

<sup>7</sup> D. Fulghum, 'Iraqi Invasion Threat Reassessed By Military', *AWST*, 14 November 1994.

<sup>8</sup> *DoD Background Briefing*, 20 October 1994, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> M. McCurry, 'U.S. Warns Iraq About Troop Movements', *White House Press Statement*, 7 October 1994, p. 1.



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President Clinton reiterated that: 'If Iraq really is trying to say in some insistent way that what they want is relief from the U.N. sanctions, there is a clear way for them to achieve that relief -- simply comply with the United Nations resolutions.'<sup>10</sup> It was unthinkable that Iraq could be allowed to behave with impunity in such a belligerent manner.

The British government shared the aforementioned view of the situation. In London, the Secretary of State for Defence, Malcolm Rifkind, and the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Douglas Hurd, held a press conference in which they stated: 'We view with concern the troop movements in southern Iraq and the recent hostile statements by Iraq. If Iraq believes that its threatening behaviour will achieve anything, then it is making a serious error of judgement.'<sup>11</sup> To reinforce the implied threat, the British government began to deploy additional forces to the Persian Gulf. As an initial step, they sent 45 Commando, Royal Marines, and six additional 'Tornado' aircraft to Kuwait.<sup>12</sup>

The French government reacted more strongly than usual. It expressed its concern and deployed Georges Leygues to the Gulf.<sup>13</sup> French forces in the region at the time amounted to six Mirage 2000C on Operation SOUTHERN WATCH, five Jaguars on Operation PROVIDE COMFORT II and two ships in Oman. The only French ground forces in the region were 4,000 troops in Djibouti.<sup>14</sup> While not necessarily a great addition to the array of US forces in the region, it was an important gesture that reflected a useful degree of coalition solidarity in the face of a potential threat.

<sup>10</sup> 'Press Conference by the President', *WHPR*, 7 October 1994, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Statement cited in M. Nicholson and G. Graham, 'Clinton sends in warships to warn Iraq off Kuwait', *ET*, 8 October 1994.

<sup>12</sup> 'Statement on Iraq', Foreign and Commonwealth Arms Control and Disarmament Quarterly Review, No. 35 (October 1994), p. 23.

<sup>13</sup> 'Irak-Koweït-Communiqué du ministre des Affaires étrangères', 8 October 1994, p. 196, and 'Irak-Koweït-Communiqué du ministre des Affaires étrangères', 9 October 1994, p. 201, *La Politique Étrangère de la France*, September-October 1994.



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**Table 8: Forces in Theatre 5 October 1994**

	United States	United Kingdom	France
Air Forces (no naval air)	9 F-15C 24 F-16C 29 Support Aircraft	6 GR-1 Tornados 1 Tanker	6 Mirage 2000, F-1
Land Forces	15 <sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit  Task Force 4 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, 7 <sup>th</sup> Air Defense Artillery (TF 4-7 ADA)	NIL	NIL
Naval Forces (includes marines at sea)	USS Leyte Gulf USS Hewitt USS Rodney M Davis USS Reid USS John L Hall USNS Mars USNS Pecos USNS Powhatan USNS McDonnell  ARG: USS Tripoli USS Cleveland USS Fort McHenry USS Rushmore	Armilla Patrol: HMS Cornwall HMS Cardiff AUX Brambleleaf	NIL

The UNSC became concerned about the RGFC's presence in southern Iraq. It condemned the deployment and asked the Secretary-General to ensure that: '... the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) redoubles its vigilance and reports immediately any violation of the demilitarised zone ...'<sup>15</sup> At the time, this was the extent of its possible

<sup>14</sup> D. Buchan, 'France offers gulf forces, but without enthusiasm', *ET*, 12 October 1994, and J. Isnard, 'Logique de force en Irak', *Monde*, 12 October 1994.

<sup>15</sup> 'Statement by the President of the Security Council concerning cooperation by Iraq with UNSCOM and reports of movements by Iraqi troops', S/PRST/1994/58 (8 October 1994), *UN*, p. 685.



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actions. Without actual fighting, the UNSC could do little but observe and issue statements.

There was little support for Iraq's stances as the deployment was seen as a threat to regional stability. Despite the fact that deployment of Iraqi forces north of the DMZ was not a breach of SCR 687, the UNSC was unusually supportive of the coalition. The Russian and French governments quickly abandoned their calls for a lifting of sanctions.<sup>16</sup> Such leniency seemed futile with the RGFC seemingly prepared to invade.

On 8 October, the American government was quite concerned about what it considered Iraqi preparations for the invasion of Kuwait. The real object of concern was the addition of over 10,000 RGFC troops from three divisions to the 50,000 troops that garrisoned southern Iraq.<sup>17</sup> General John Shalikashvili, then the Chairman of the JCS, described his perception of the situation: 'Our task was to deter him from moving into Kuwait or beyond, and if he did, to slow him down, stop him, and then push him back. That's the task that I saw at hand, and what you saw was the beginning of the force necessary to do that.'<sup>18</sup> CINC CENTCOM, then Lieutenant-General J.H. Binford Peay III, U.S. Army, identified what he thought was necessary to achieve this goal. The list of additional force requirements included a USMC Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), a MEF, more aircraft, and an Army Corps.<sup>19</sup> The RGFC contained the best-trained and best-equipped formations in the Iraqi armed forces. CENTCOM's planners assumed that they would have to contend with a sizeable mechanised force equipped with relatively modern tanks and artillery.

<sup>16</sup> See: M. Nicholson, 'Security Council takes harder line', ET, 11 October 1994.

<sup>17</sup> Lieutenant General J. Sheehan and Major General P. Hughes in DoD News Briefing, 8 October 1994, p. 3, M. Gordon, 'Pentagon Moving A Force of 4,000 to Guard Kuwait', NYT, 9 October 1994, and M. Gordon, 'U.S. Sends Force As Iraqi Soldiers Threaten Kuwait', NYT, 8 October 1994.

<sup>18</sup> DoD News Briefing, 11 October 1994, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> DoD Background Briefing, 20 October 1994, p. 2.



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### Means and Target Sets

The detection of the RGFC's deployment gave the coalition warning that action was potentially imminent. The coalition therefore had a choice; it could deal with the threat with its assets in theatre or it could reinforce them in order to possibly deter the Iraqi government from acting and prepare for the defence of Kuwait should deterrence fail. Failure to reinforce the JTF-SWA would have suggested that the coalition was not sufficiently interested to take action.

There was a paradox at work during the crisis. An offensive air campaign was out of the question unless Iraqi force actually entered Kuwait, which meant no action could be taken until it was possibly too late. The only viable target set was Iraq's fielded forces, but even attacks against them were unjustifiable unless Iraq attacked. Political constraints reduced the coalition's ability to retain the initiative.

The deployment of ground forces offered the certainty of communicating coalition resolve. US Army or USMC forces brought from CONUS would certainly demonstrate that the coalition was willing to fight for Kuwait. Such a move also offered the promise of being better able to cut any flow of Iraqi units into Kuwait than an air campaign that reinforced Kuwaiti ground forces. However, this option relied on speed. CONUS-based units would have to board aircraft, fly to Kuwait, disembark, and move to their assembly areas to link up with the prepositioned equipment. If the Iraqis invaded prior to the deployment of land forces to tactical positions, then they would be able to inflict serious casualties on the coalition or prevent the deployment in defence of Kuwait altogether. The combination of in-theatre assets and deployment of forces from CONUS allowed the coalition to provide a clear measure of defence for Kuwait and signal the intent to fight. This held the possibility of deterring the Iraqi government while preparing for the defence of Kuwait.



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### Analysis

On 8 October 1994, the American government took further steps to dissuade the Iraqis from carrying out what appeared to be an invasion of Kuwait by launching Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR. President Clinton later reported to Congress that:

Accordingly, on October 8, 1994, I ordered the immediate deployment of additional U.S. military forces to the Persian Gulf. These deployments included the USS George Washington Carrier Battle Group and its accompanying cruise missile ships, a U.S. Army Mechanised Task Force, and personnel to operate two additional Patriot missile batteries. On October 10, I further ordered the deployment of over 500 U.S. Air Force and Marine Corps combat and supporting aircraft to the region.<sup>20</sup>

The USS George Washington carrier battle group left the Adriatic Sea and steamed south towards the Suez Canal. Two American warships, the USS Hewitt and the USS Leyte Gulf, were already there.<sup>21</sup> Within 48 hours of the order, the USS George Washington and its battle group sailed into the Red Sea from the Suez Canal. This added another 75 combat aircraft to the 67 that flew as part of SOUTHERN WATCH.<sup>22</sup> The Army Mechanised Task Force to be brought into the theatre was a brigade of the 24th Mechanised Division stationed at Fort Stewart, Georgia. Yet President Clinton's description of the initial deployment to Congress omitted some of the units that deployed initially, such as the 15<sup>th</sup> MEU.

The omissions are important to note for different reasons. The ARG was already in theatre conducting an exercise with the forces of the UAE. On

<sup>20</sup>Text Of A Letter From The President To The Speaker Of The House Of Representatives And The President Pro Tempore Of The Senate', WHIPR, 27 October 1994, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Sheehan and Hughes, p. 1, and 'Forward Navy and Marine Units Respond to Gulf Threat', Navy News Service, 12 October 1994, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> DoD Background Briefing, 20 October 1994, p. 3, M. Gordon, 'Pentagon Moving A Force of 4,000 to Guard Kuwait', NYT, 9 October 1994, and Sheehan & Hughes, p. 1.



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8 October, it promptly sailed north to the coast of Kuwait.<sup>23</sup> The other was the deployment of the 23rd Composite Air Wing of the USAF. At the time, this unit was on a 'Red Flag' exercise at Nellis AFB, Nevada. It was withdrawn from the exercise and moved immediately to the theatre via its home base at Pope AFB, North Carolina.<sup>24</sup> This addition gave the CINC extra aircraft. The remainder of the 24th Mechanised division was also placed on alert along with another composite air wing and I MEF.<sup>25</sup> The British also increased their contribution to the region. HMS Cornwall was off the coast of Kuwait City by 9 October.<sup>26</sup>

**Table 9: Forces in Theatre 8 October 1994**

	United States	United Kingdom	France
Air Forces	9 F-15 24 F-16 29 Support Aircraft	6 GR-1 Tornados 1 Tanker	6 Mirage 2000, F-1
Land Forces	NIL	NIL	NIL
Naval Forces	USS Leyte Gulf and Escorts ARG 15 <sup>th</sup> MEU	Armilla Patrol	Georges Leygues

This was only the beginning. However, the announcement of the initial deployments did not appear to affect the Iraqi deployment of forces in southern Iraq. On 8 October, Major General Pat Hughes, the Director of Intelligence for the Joint Staff, and Lieutenant General John Sheehan, the Director of Operations, claimed that: '... over the last 48 hours elements of two of the Republican Guard divisions have moved from positions north of the Baghdad area in the central part of the country down to within 20

<sup>23</sup> 'Forward Navy and Marine Units Respond to Gulf Threat', Navy News Service, 12 October 1994, p. 1, and Sheehan & Hughes, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> DoD Background Briefing, 12 October 1994, p. 4, and DoD Background Briefing, 20 October 1994, p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> Sheehan & Hughes, pp. 2-3.

<sup>26</sup> M. Nicholson and R. Allen, 'US warns Saddam of "horrendous" price for war', ET, 10 October 1994.



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kilometres of the Iraqi border . . .<sup>27</sup> The situation appeared to be worse on 9 October, when the Iraqi forces began to establish logistical bases in southern Iraq and the number of Iraqi forces continued to climb.<sup>28</sup>

**Table 10: Forces Deploying 8 October 1994**

	United States	United Kingdom	France
Air Forces	23 <sup>rd</sup> Composite Air Wing: 24 A-10, 18 F-16, 14 C-130  9 F-15 6 KC-135 2 RC-135	NIL	NIL
Land Forces	1 <sup>st</sup> Brigade, 24 <sup>th</sup> Mechanised Division TF 4-7 ADA	NIL	NIL
Naval Forces	USS George Washington USS San Jacinto USS Barry Carrier Air Wing 7 (~75 Aircraft)	NIL	NIL

The preparation and deployment of American forces continued on 9 and 10 October. The Mechanised Task Force began to arrive, albeit in two tranches: 'The initial elements of the 1st Brigade minus that was sent to fall in on the equipment that was pre-positioned in Kuwait, was over there in 48 hours after told to deploy [on 10 October 1994]. And the brigade minus had fallen in on its equipment and was ready for combat four days after it was told to deploy [on 12 October 1994].'<sup>29</sup> Two Patriot batteries deployed under similar conditions.<sup>30</sup> In the meantime, the JTF-SWA increased the number of

<sup>27</sup> Sheehan & Hughes, pp. 1 and 3.

<sup>28</sup> 'Text Of A Letter From The President', p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> DoD Background Briefing, 20 October 1994, p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Sheehan & Hughes, pp. 1-2.



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flights over southern Iraq. Brigadier General William Guth, the commander of the 4404<sup>th</sup> Composite Air Wing, USAF, noted in an interview with the press that: ‘. . . in an effort to show presence [the coalition air forces] about doubled the operational tempo . . .’<sup>31</sup> Two days later, the President ordered a greater force package to the Middle East. The deployment seemed to dissuade the Iraqis from invading Kuwait. This, of course, assumes that it was their intent to actually invade.

Table 11: Forces on Alert 8 October 1994

	United States	United Kingdom	France
Air Forces	1 Composite Air Wing	NIL	NIL
Land Forces	24 <sup>th</sup> Mechanised Division (-)  I MEF	NIL	NIL
Naval Forces	Maritime Prepositioning Ships	NIL	NIL

On 10 October 1994, the Iraqi government finally blinked. It sought to assure the UNSC that the RGFC would withdraw from southern Iraq.<sup>32</sup> President Clinton remarked in reaction that: ‘Iraq announced today that it will pull back its troops from the Kuwait border. But we’re interested in facts, not promises; in deeds, not words, and we have not yet seen evidence that Iraq’s troops are, in fact, pulling back. We’ll be watching very closely to see that they do so.’<sup>33</sup> There was no immediate evidence of any changes in the Iraqi force posture. As a result of this lack of change, the President announced the following day that the deployment of forces would continue to ensure that the

<sup>31</sup> Brigadier General William Guth, cited in D. Fulghum, ‘Iraqi Invasion Threat Reassessed by Military’, *AWST*, 14 November 1994.

<sup>32</sup> ‘Letter dated 10 October 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council’, S/1994/1149 (10 October 1994), p. 2.

<sup>33</sup> ‘U.S. Actions To Preserve Stability in the Persian Gulf’ (10 October 1994), *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*, Vol. 5, No. 42 (17 October 1994), p. 689.



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Iraqis would not invade and would withdraw their forces to central Iraq.<sup>34</sup> A day later, evidence appeared that Iraqi forces had started withdrawing to the north. This did not mean that the coalition, and the US in particular, felt that the crisis had abated. Dee Dee Myers noted that:

. . . we have seen some evidence that troops are withdrawing from the southern area, from the Bosra [sic] region of Iraq. There have been some indications that that is broad-based; there have been some movements such as tanks being loaded up on trains and other things that indicate that they are, in fact, pulling out. However, some units do appear to be in place, so we're continuing to monitor it closely . . .<sup>35</sup>

**Table 12: Forces Deploying 10 October 1994**

	United States	United Kingdom	France
Air Forces	42 A-10 66 F-16 54 F-15 117 Support Aircraft	6 GR-1 Tornados	NIL
Land Forces	24 Mech Div (-) Forward Elements I MEF	45 Commando, Royal Marines 1 Battery, 29 <sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, Royal Artillery	NIL
Naval Forces	6 F/A-18 Maritime Prepositioning Ships	NIL	NIL

The American government recognised that it would take some time for the Iraqi forces to withdraw. The same day, the forward elements of I MEF began to deploy from Camp Pendleton, California to the Middle East. This

<sup>34</sup> DoD News Briefing, 11 October 1994, p. 1, 'Remarks By The President Upon Departure For Detroit, Michigan', WHPR, 11 October 1994, p. 1, and DoS DPB, 12 October 1994, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> DoD Background Briefing, 12 October 1994, p. 1, and 'Press Briefing By Dee Dee Myers', White House Press Briefing, (henceforth WHPB), 12 October 1994, p. 1.



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would add roughly 18,000 more troops.<sup>36</sup> The movement of a large mechanised force is not simple or easy to conduct at short notice. It was imprudent to rescind forward movement orders and to start redeploying these forces back 'over-the-horizon' when the Iraqi forces had not completely withdrawn. On 15 October 1994, two RGFC brigades remained camped near Nasiriyah, some 180 kilometres west-north-west of Basra.<sup>37</sup>

**Table 13: Forces in Theater 10 October 1994**

	United States	United Kingdom	France
Air Forces	24 A-10 18 F-15 32 F-16 51 Support Aircraft	6 GR-1 Tornados 1 Support Aircraft	6 Mirage 2000, F-1
Land Forces	TF 4-7 ADA 1 <sup>st</sup> Bde, 24 Mech Div	45 Commando, Royal Marines	NIL
Naval Forces	USS Leyte Gulf and Escorts USS George Washington and Escorts ARG (with 15 <sup>th</sup> MEU)	Armilla Patrol	Georges Leygues

**Table 14: Forces on Alert 10 October 1994**

	United States	United Kingdom	France
Air Forces	4 HH 60	NIL	NIL
Land Forces	I MEF (Main) 101 <sup>st</sup> Aviation Bde	NIL	NIL
Naval Forces	Maritime Prepositioning Ships	NIL	NIL

<sup>36</sup> DoD Background Briefing, 12 October 1994, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> G. Graham and M. Littlejohns, 'US warns Iraq on new build-ups', *EE*, 17 October 1994.



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The two Iraqi brigades around Nasiriyah attracted American attention. While not a large force, it was still seen as a threat by the American government. In a radio address, President Clinton noted that:

Much of the force that Iraq sent to the border has retreated. But significant elements still remain within striking distance of Kuwait. We're watching this situation very carefully and continuing with the deployment of our own forces. They will remain in the area and on alert until we are absolutely satisfied that Iraq no longer poses threats to Kuwait.<sup>38</sup>

By late October, the size and saliency of the threat diminished. The Americans began to downgrade their force posture, and stop some of their deployments. I MEF stopped deploying, but the 24<sup>th</sup> Mechanised Division continued deploying although under the guise of an in-theatre exercise. The prepositioning ships also began to treat the deployment as an exercise.<sup>39</sup> The British government decided to keep 45 Commando in theatre.<sup>40</sup> Exercising may have also been an aid to the American attempts to base equipment in theatre. Previously, only one brigade's worth of equipment was held there, and political concerns had obviated the prepositioning of additional equipment. In addition to this, American force levels in the region were increased. 24 A-10 ground-attack aircraft were deployed to Al Jaber airbase in Kuwait on a permanent basis.<sup>41</sup> In early November 1994, the virtual absence of threat prompted the US to withdraw some of its forces. The DoD spokesman announced that: "The threat to the security and stability of the region remains, however, U.S. forces must therefore remain in the region to help enforce U.N. Security Council Resolutions."<sup>42</sup> The 24<sup>th</sup> Mechanised Division would return to Fort Stewart, GA, the

<sup>38</sup> 'Radio Address By The President To The Nation', WHIPR, 15 October 1994, p. 2. See also: DoD Background Briefing, 20 October 1994, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> DoD Background Briefing, 20 October 1994, pp. 2 and 3-5. See also: DoD News Briefing, 20 October 1994, pp. 1-2, and DoD News Briefing, 25 October 1994, pp. 1-2.

<sup>40</sup> P. Almond, 'British And US forces to stay on in Kuwait', DT, 26 October 1994.

<sup>41</sup> M. Gordon, 'U.S. Will Station Warplanes in Kuwait', IHL, 28 October 1994.

<sup>42</sup> 'Troop Withdrawal Plans Set', News Release (Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs)), pp. 1-2.



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number of aircraft in JTF-SWA would remain augmented, and the US naval presence would return to its pre-crisis level.<sup>43</sup> This marked the end of the actual crisis, but a diplomatic aftershock was still to come.

Was VIGILANT WARRIOR a success? It is not possible to answer that question without first examining some of the diplomacy that surrounded the crisis as the diplomatic wrangling affected Iraqi behaviour. The Russian government intervened in order to obtain its preferred outcome. In addition to this, divisions within the French government over whether or not Iraq intended to invade became public. This division within the coalition was, to say the best of it, unhelpful. However, VIGILANT WARRIOR was a powerful demonstration of American resolve and capability. While the crisis stopped short of actual hostilities, it served both to cement the bond between the coalition and its Arab allies and to affirm that the coalition truly was serious about its responsibilities pertaining to further threats against Kuwait.

The Franco-American dispute began as a result of differing interpretations of certain resolutions and the degree of the threat posed to Kuwait by Iraq. The French government was also opposed to the creation of a 'Ground Exclusion Zone' (GEZ), the Clinton Administration's solution for preventing future attempts at invasion. During the crisis, William Perry, the US Secretary of Defense, came up with this idea of excluding the RGFC from southern Iraq while allowing existing garrisons to remain.<sup>44</sup> The French government, fearing that a GEZ might be potentially destabilising, was opposed to the idea, as it provided the Iraqis with a very simple means of testing allied will.<sup>45</sup> Based on a historical precedent, this was not incorrect, but both NFZs fulfilled the same criterion as was demonstrated in Chapter Eight.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> 'Press Briefing by Dee Dee Myers', *WHPB*, 12 October 1994, pp. 6-7 and 9.

<sup>45</sup> 'Entretien du Ministre d'État, Ministre De La Défense a "France 2"', 12 October 1994, *Propos sur la Défense*, No. 46 (October 1994), p. 146, 'Irak-Réponse du ministère des Affaires étrangères, M. Alain Juppe à une question orale au Sénat', *La Politique Étrangère de la France*, September-October 1994, p. 217, 'Press Briefing by Dee Dee Myers', *WHPB*, 12 October 1994, p. 2, E. Sciolino, 'U.S. Offers Plan To Avoid Threat From Iraq Again', *NYT*, 13 October 1994.



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The French defence minister, François Léotard, claimed that the crisis had been exaggerated, and had more to do with American domestic politics than with an Iraqi threat. Furthermore, he, like many in the French cabinet, did not believe that Iraq had done anything illegal in deploying its troops in southern Iraq.<sup>46</sup> The deployment of Iraqi forces to southern Iraq was not illegal but merely threatening. The intent behind a GEZ was to ensure that there would be no ambiguity about the illegal nature of such deployments. This would provide the coalition with another means of containing Iraq and further warning in case of future deployments. The French position sacrificed any chance for surprise in order to achieve the status of 'legality', whereas the American government sought to maintain the freedom of action associated with not having to expend additional diplomatic effort. The American Permanent Representative to the UN noted that this hindered British and American efforts to maintain consensus with their Arab allies.<sup>47</sup> Minister Léotard implied that VIGILANT WARRIOR, like most cases, was an American overreaction. This was reminiscent of earlier arguments about the appropriateness of means for dealing with Iraq. Within a week, Alain Juppé, the French Foreign Minister, publicly stated that more peaceful means were required for dealing with Iraq.<sup>48</sup> The necessity for action had been questioned and concomitant with this came a loss of credibility. Whether the Iraqi threat had been exaggerated or not, the coalition's credibility had been weakened by the dispute. Even with a significant threat, the coalition could become divided, thus demonstrating to the Iraqi government that the coalition's threats could be countered.

<sup>46</sup> 'Point de Presse du 11 Octobre Déclarations du Porte Parole', 11 October 1994, French EMPR, and 'Press Briefing by Dee Dee Myers', WHIPB, 12 October 1994, pp. 4-5, and DoS DPB, 13 October 1994, pp. 9-10.

<sup>47</sup> G. Graham, S. Dalby, and M. Nicholson, 'US and France clash over exclusion zone in southern Iraq', ET, 14 October 1994.

<sup>48</sup> M. Naïm, 'Selon Alain Juppe, il faut "renir les conditions de la paix et non préparer une nouvelle guerre"', Monde, 18 October 1994.



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The Clinton Administration continued to work towards the creation of a GEZ in southern Iraq. On 14 October, Christine Shelly, the Department of State press briefer, stated that:

. . . our primary objective has been to end the threat to Kuwait, which was posed by the movement of Iraqi troops to the southern area and then to ensure that such a situation does not recur.

We're presently consulting with Security Council members on a resolution that is designed to accomplish both of those objectives. I'm told there were some informal P-5 type exchanges this morning.<sup>49</sup>

While the Franco-American argument festered, the program was still being pursued at the Security Council. The US government sought to obtain a resolution that would order the withdrawal of the Iraqi forces from the Kuwaiti border.<sup>50</sup> On 15 October, the UNSC passed SCR 949 as a Chapter VII resolution. This eliminated the French government's concern about positive authorisation, but their point about a means of testing allied will remained valid. The resolution stated that the UNSC:

1. Condemns recent military deployments by Iraq in the direction of the border with Kuwait;

2. Demands that Iraq immediately complete the withdrawal of all military units recently deployed to southern Iraq to their positions;

3. Demands that Iraq not again utilise its military or any other forces in a hostile or provocative manner to threaten either its neighbours or United Nations operations in Iraq;

4. Demands therefore that Iraq not redeploy to the south the units referred to paragraph 2 above or take any other action to enhance its military capacity in southern Iraq.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> DoS DPB, 14 October 1994, p. 12.

<sup>50</sup> B. Crossette, 'U.S. Is Demanding A Quick U.N. Vote On Iraqi Pullback', NYT, 15 October 1994.

<sup>51</sup> 'Security Council resolution concerning military deployments by Iraq in the direction of the border with Kuwait', S/RES/949 (1994) (15 October 1994), UN, p. 694.



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This gave the coalition a licence to use force if the Iraqis repeated their southward movement. It left the Iraqi garrisons in southern Iraq alone. Without this, it was believed Iran could exert influence more easily in southern Iraq.

The Russian government intervened as VIGILANT WARRIOR drew to a close in order to obtain a particular outcome. The reintegration of Iraq into the international community held out potential economic benefits for Russia. Igor Ivanov, the Russian 1st Deputy Foreign Minister, and Viktor Posuvalyuk, the head of the Middle Eastern department of the Russian ministry of Foreign Affairs, travelled to Iraq in order to bring about what was, from the Russian government's point of view, the preferable outcome to the crisis.<sup>52</sup> Iraq would have to demonstrate good faith to the international community that Iraq merited its trust; this was the exact opposite of the effect of Iraq's recent actions. A joint Iraqi-Russian communiqué to the Security Council stated that:

Iraq announced officially that at 2100 hours on 12 October it had completed the withdrawal of its troops to rearguard positions. The Russian Federation expressed its warm appreciation of this step on the part of Iraq.

Iraq affirmed its readiness to resolve in a positive manner the issue of recognising Kuwait and borders, as laid down in Security Council resolution 833 (1993).<sup>53</sup>

The price for the recognition of Kuwait was the lifting of sanctions.<sup>54</sup> Neither the American nor the British governments believed this expression of willingness for the recognition of Kuwait would be sufficient to justify the end of sanctions. The coalition decided to keep additional forces in

<sup>52</sup> M. Nicholson, 'Russian envoys start Baghdad talks', *FT*, 13 October 1994.

<sup>53</sup> 'Letter from the Representatives of Iraq and the Russian Federation transmitting the text of a joint communique containing Iraq's announcement that it had withdrawn its troops to rearguard positions on 12 October 1994', S/1994/1173 (15 October 1994), *UN*, p. 695.

<sup>54</sup> B. Crossette, 'Russia and Iraq Work Out Plan to Ease Gulf Tension', *NYT*, 14 October 1994, and A. La Guardia, 'Iraq tries to strike bargain on Kuwait', *DT*, 14 October 1994.



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theatre until they were satisfied that the RGFC units had withdrawn.<sup>55</sup> Both the American and British governments supported the idea of a timetable and probationary period for the lifting of sanctions in principle, but given Iraq's recent belligerence, were unwilling to allow such a scheme to begin at the time.<sup>56</sup> The sanctions remained in place, and a timetable for their lifting remained a mere possibility.

The Russian government sought to convince Washington that the Iraqi government needed to be rewarded. The Russians realised that any of their 'solutions' to the crisis would require American concurrence to prevent the use of the American veto within the UNSC. The Russian Foreign Minister, Andrei Kozyrev, reported that the Iraqis said they were willing to recognise Kuwait.<sup>57</sup> Andrei Kozyrev met with Warren Christopher in New York to discuss the situation on 17 October.<sup>58</sup> Their meeting resulted in a series of joint declarations about what the two had pledged to do. This amounted to vague statements about the necessity of co-operation and the lack of reward for the withdrawal of threats.<sup>59</sup> Reports circulated that the Iraqi People's Assembly was going to meet to approve the recognition of Kuwait.<sup>60</sup> The Assembly, instead of doing as was predicted, issued a statement of support for Saddam Hussein.<sup>61</sup> The key to the problem was the potential lifting of sanctions. The reward for Russian intervention, in Iraqi eyes, was a schedule for the lifting of the sanctions and this was the intended

<sup>55</sup> G. Graham, M. Nicholson and S. Dalby, 'US rebuffs Russian mediation on Kuwait', *ET*, 15 October 1994.

<sup>56</sup> Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs Robert Pelletreau testified before the House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs that it was US policy to ensure that there was an unidentified test period of UNSCOM's monitoring system, in 'Developments in the Middle East', 4 October 1994, *CIS Document H381-13*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>57</sup> 'Russian Says Iraqis Yield On Sovereignty of Kuwait', *III*, 15-16 October 1994.

<sup>58</sup> *DoS DPB*, 17 October 1994, p. 10.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>60</sup> M. Nicholson, 'Iraq to approve border', *ET*, 18 October 1994.

<sup>61</sup> M. Nicholson and M. Littlejohns, 'No formal Kuwait recognition', *ET*, 18 October 1994.



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reward for Iraq if they chose to recognise Kuwait.<sup>62</sup> The American and British governments remained unwilling to allow the sanctions to be lifted and refused even to discuss a timetable.<sup>63</sup>

The Russian intervention eventually made progress. Two days after the US troop withdrawal was announced on 7 November 1994, the Russian government announced that the Iraqi government promised that it would recognise Kuwaiti sovereignty.<sup>64</sup> This measure did not lead to an immediate change of heart in the American government. The State Department issued a backhanded warning about the Iraqi promise: 'If today's announcements are followed by the necessary implementing measures, it will mark an important achievement for the United Nations Security Council which has steadfastly insisted that Iraq must comply – and comply fully with all its requirements.'<sup>65</sup> The Russian gambit failed to bring about a timetable, let alone a lifting of sanctions. Both the American and British governments were adamant that the Iraqi statement had to be ratified and proven to be true.<sup>66</sup>

The American and British governments left themselves open to accusations of threat inflation or having 'moved the goalposts' to prevent the lifting of sanctions. The Iraqi government then complied with their wishes by submitting all the documentation to the Security Council as proof of their recognition.<sup>67</sup> In exchange for its actions, the Iraqi government was praised

<sup>62</sup> 'As you were', *Economist*, 22 October 1994.

<sup>63</sup> M. Walker and M. Tran, 'US fears Russian sanctions plan will let Saddam off the hook', *Guardian*, 18 October 1994, and C. Laurence, 'Iraq oil sanctions will not be lifted', *DT*, 18 October 1994.

<sup>64</sup> R. Matthews, 'Baghdad recognises Kuwaiti sovereignty', *ET*, 11 November 1994, and 'Moscow wins Iraqi pledge over Kuwaiti sovereignty', *ET*, 9 November 1994.

<sup>65</sup> *DoS DPB*, 11 November 1994, p. 2.

<sup>66</sup> See: M. Evans, 'Sanctions must stay, Foreign Office says', *Times*, 11 November 1994, G. Jansen, 'Saddam sees the light?', *MEI*, 18 November 1994, J. Kampfner and G. Butt, 'Iraqi recognition of Kuwait will not end embargo', *DT*, 11 November 1994, and 'U.S. Insists Iraq Must Do More Than Recognize Kuwait', *IHL*, 9 November 1994.

<sup>67</sup> 'Letter dated 13 November 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq transmitting the declaration of the National Assembly (10 November 1994) and decree of the Revolutionary Command Council No. 200 (10 November 1994) affirming Iraq's recognition of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Kuwait and of its international boundaries as endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 833 (1993)', *UN*, pp. 696-698, and 'Statement by the



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by Madeleine Albright, the President of the Security Council at the time, who noted that: 'The Security Council considers this decision by Iraq to be a significant step in the direction towards implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.'<sup>68</sup> Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR had been more of a success than expected.

VIGILANT WARRIOR was an attempt at coercion through power projection, which relied on threats rather than the use of force. Air power was used to monitor the situation and to bring forces in from 'over-the-horizon'. The Iraqi choice was simple: it could have either done nothing and possibly withdrawn the three RGFC divisions from southern Iraq or it could have crossed the DMZ and entered Kuwait in some form of feint, raid or invasion. It chose the former. The coalition's deployment was intended to cause the Iraqi government to do nothing (inaction being the coalition's desired concession). This was an attempt to deter Iraq, and the attempt at threat-based coercion was sufficient for success.

The Iraqi government's motives remain unknown. One can only construct theories of why it ordered the RGFC to southern Iraq and whether an invasion would have occurred in the absence of VIGILANT WARRIOR. In November of 1994, reports surfaced that even in the USAF, there were doubts that the movements were a prelude to an invasion, as the only forces that moved were ground forces.<sup>69</sup> Iraq's actions were either a case where Iraq's economy dictated that the government try to reduce pressure by seeking a provocation with the coalition and/or that the Iraqi government saw an opportunity for action. If it was the former was true, then an invasion of Kuwait was not necessary to address the problem. A renewed threat from the coalition would suffice to reduce pressure. Byman and Waxman offered the

President of the Security Council concerning Iraq's recognition of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Kuwait and of its international boundaries as endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 833 (1993)', in S/PRST/1994/68 (16 November 1994), UN, pp. 698-699.

<sup>68</sup> S/PRST/1994/68, UN, pp. 698-699. See also: DoS DPB, 14 November 1994, p. 11.

<sup>69</sup> Fulghum, 'Iraqi Invasion Threat'.



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only, although unverifiable, evidence supporting the other explanation: a 'high-level Iraqi defector' stated that Saddam Hussein would have attacked had there been no response.<sup>70</sup> A possible invasion of Kuwait could be used as a bargaining tool for the lifting of sanctions.<sup>71</sup> The deployment could have had any number of purposes. If the Iraqi movement into southern Iraq had been a feint for diplomatic reasons, or even as a preliminary military exercise to test American and coalition readiness to fight and in what manner, then it would be semantically wrong to claim an Iraqi backdown. This all suggests that Iraqi forces would have attacked had no reaction occurred, but VIGILANT WARRIOR cannot be described as a case of successful deterrence. The operation represented the application of a strategy of deterrence, but not a deterrence situation.

VIGILANT WARRIOR represented the application of a combined approach to deterrence using both land forces and air power. The JTF-SWA offered a command and support infrastructure for 'Over-The-Horizon' forces as an enabler. In addition, it offered significant reconnaissance and intelligence capability that translated into strong situational awareness. The reinforcement of JTF-SWA with ground forces served as a means of reducing the probability of Iraq attaining any benefits from offensive operations against Kuwait. The JTF-SWA detected the movement, but did not necessarily deter it. Had it been a successful deterrent, no such movement would have taken place as a prelude to invasion. The CINC's list of requirements would have been more than sufficient to defend Kuwait against an invasion. It would have also been sufficient to mount offensive operations on land against Iraqi forces in Iraq should they have not complied with SCRs 687 and 949.

The danger with VIGILANT WARRIOR was that it was possible to draw the wrong lesson. An example of this occurred before the operation ended:

<sup>70</sup> Byman and Waxman, *Confronting Iraq*, p. 56.



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The end result of this force build-up, which was, I hasten to add, accompanied by actions on our part to deter the Iraqis and to be ready to act against them if that was required, also took place during that time. So the fact of the Iraqi build-up was certainly being paralleled, if you will, by our activities during this period.

The bottom line for the Iraqis was two Republican Guard armoured divisions and some other combat support elements, notably air defences, some additional artillery, and some support equipment capability, came into the south and arrayed themselves in a threatening manner against Kuwait, near the Kuwait border.<sup>72</sup>

These statements imply that the Iraqis were actually going to invade. Short of proving that it was Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi government's intent to invade Kuwait a second time, it is not possible to say that deterrence actually occurred. However, this may have been more indicative of a degree of success with SOUTHERN WATCH in that the Iraqi government knew that its forces would take high casualties in they conducted aerial operations across the SNFZ. The operation certainly showed American and allied resolve. After the troops began to arrive in theatre, Iraqi forces were withdrawn. It demonstrated the coalition's ability to bring in forces from 'over-the-horizon', and in a fashion, reinforced the belief that the coalition members were going to assist the friendly Gulf States.

The crisis prompted greater co-operation from the GCC states regardless of the popular perception of the situation. The GCC foreign ministers met in Kuwait on 11-12 October 1994, and the American Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, and the British Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, attended. The Department of State spokesperson later commented that:

<sup>71</sup> Herr, pp. 5-15.

<sup>72</sup> DoD Background Briefing, 20 October 1994, p. 1.



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. . . the Gulf Co-operation Council said that it would not let Saddam Hussein intimidate the international community again in this way. The countries participating in the meeting granted overflight clearances and bed-down for a coalition aircraft; that the GCC also agree urgently to review the burden-sharing questions to make sure that there would be an equitable sharing of the costs and other support associated with the U.S. presence there and other presence . . .<sup>73</sup>

The threat had thus created the diplomatic position that the coalition was united against a potential invasion of Kuwait. This, of course, meant that the normally more reluctant host nations were more willing to allow coalition military forces into their territories. Their governments were more accepting than ever of the JTF-SWA.<sup>74</sup> The threat posed by the Iraqi deployment of forces near the DMZ provided an opportunity for the US armed forces to test their capability for rapid deployment in a cost-justifiable manner. This heightened sense of threat reinforced the JTF-SWA's ability to enable future operations.

VIGILANT WARRIOR demonstrated that victory went to the swift (or defeat went to the hesitant). It demonstrated to the Gulf Allies that the coalition's efforts were not solely about the containment (or punishment) of Iraq, they were also devoted to their defence. After VIGILANT WARRIOR, both the governments of Kuwait and Qatar allowed the US military to store a brigade's worth of equipment within their territories. This increased the American military's ability to fight a contingency in the Gulf region.

The nature of the communication between the coalition and Iraq further complicated the issue. Most of the communication was conducted indirectly, either by decree or through a third party (the Russian government) or through actions (i.e. the deployment of forces). This last form of communication relied on the Iraqi government's ability to perceive the increase in coalition forces over time, which is difficult to prove yet easy to

<sup>73</sup> DoS DPB, 12 October 1994, p. 5.

<sup>74</sup> Platte interview, p. 3.



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assume. The speed of the coalition's deployment demonstrated its capability to project power into the theatre, and this made its threats more credible.

The erosion of Iraqi willpower is hard to judge, as the penalty was the maintenance of the *status quo*. Given that the state of the Iraqi economy may have provided the impetus for some form of action, Saddam Hussein may have attempted a feint to provide the Iraqi people with a threat against which they could rally and forget their economic woes. If this is the case, then Saddam Hussein had achieved his aim. However, the Iraqi government made its strategic situation worse than it had been, as its actions in October 1994 contributed to its isolation, despite the Russian government's offers of mitigation. Key military personnel in the JTF-SWA believed that had the Iraqi government not acted until 90 days later, the outcome would have been significantly different.<sup>75</sup> The coalition demonstrated its capability to act quickly, and it is likely that Saddam Hussein was sufficiently deterred from undertaking offensive operations until Iraq had a significant arsenal of WMDs to support such operations, thus increasing the significance of WMDs.

### Conclusion

Nevertheless, whatever the true reason behind Iraqi troop movements, VIGILANT WARRIOR brought about real gains for the coalition side, and this was a 'strategic' victory in that Iraqi actions renewed the justification for Iraq's containment while allowing for progress. Most notably that was Iraqi recognition of Kuwait, but it was equally significant that the UN under SCR 949 gave licence for force in the absence of movement beyond territorial boundaries and on the basis of threat. The removal of the perceived military threat by Iraq was a fact, as opposed to a chimera. The SNFZ became a SEZ, and this allowed them to base 24 ground-attack aircraft in Kuwait on a permanent basis.<sup>76</sup> The coalition therefore became truly

<sup>75</sup> Platte interview, pp. 1 and 3.

<sup>76</sup> Dunn, p. 60, and S. Watkins, 'No End in Sight', *AET*, 19 December 1994.



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capable of taking direct action in southern Iraq against Iraqi forces in the air or on the ground. This was the political and military high water mark of the coalition.



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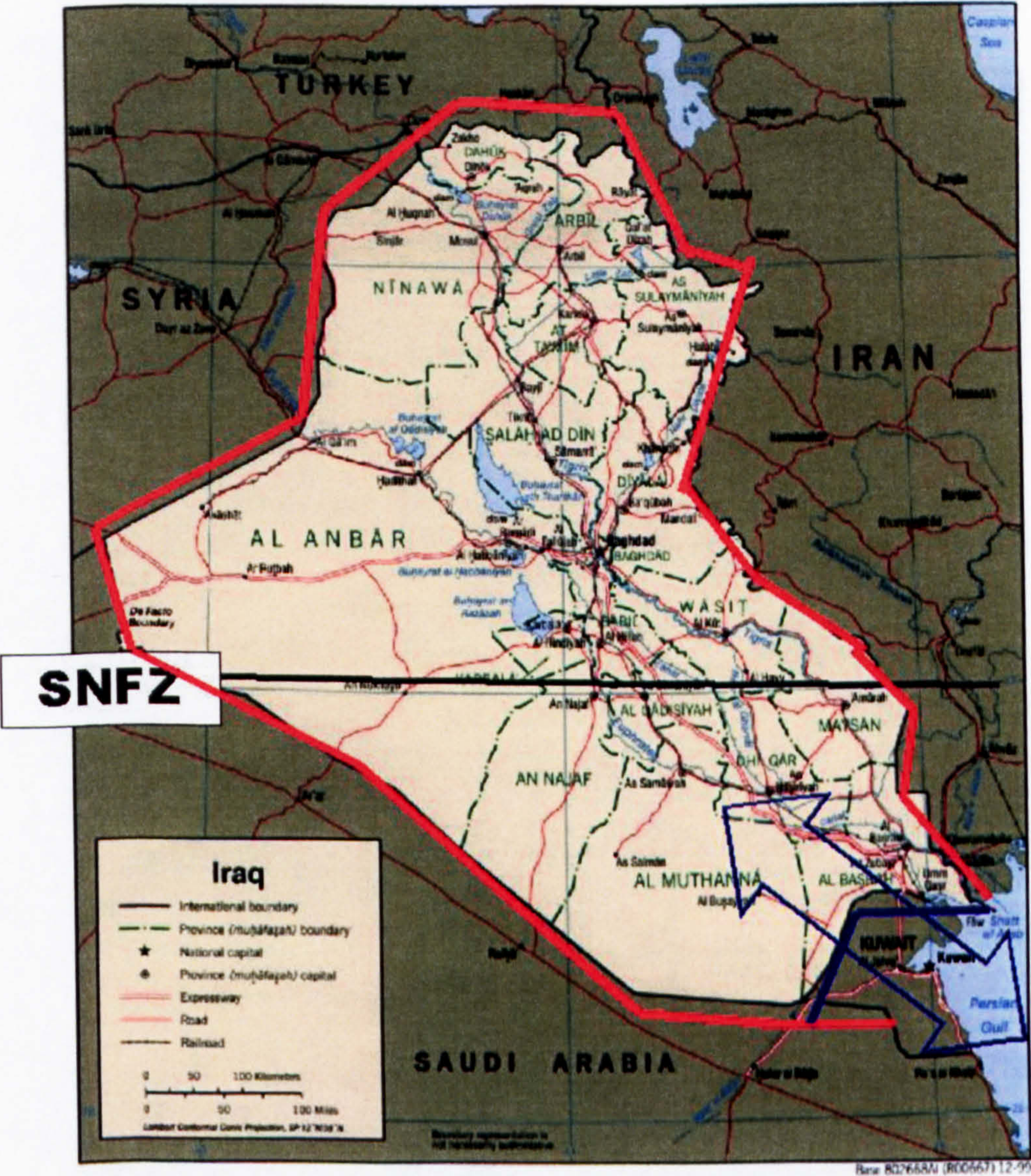
Figure 21: RGFC Movements August 1996



Courtesy of Perry-Castañeda Map Library, University of Texas at Austin



Figure 22: Entry and Egress Routes



Courtesy of Perry-Castañeda Map Library, University of Texas at Austin



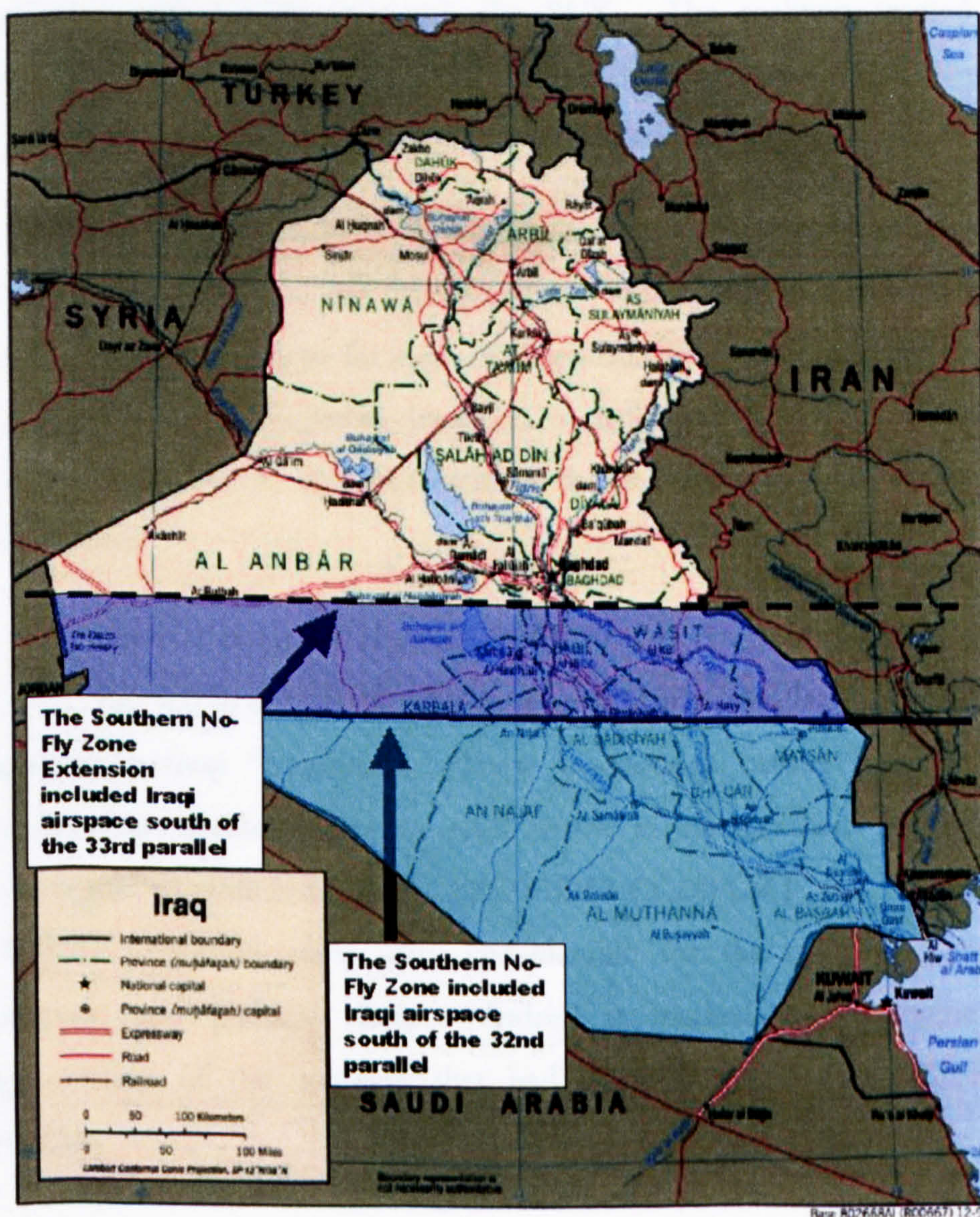
Figure 23: Targets 3 August 1996



Courtesy of Perry-Castañeda Map Library, University of Texas at Austin



Figure 24: SNFZ Extension



Courtesy of Perry-Castañeda Map Library, University of Texas at Austin



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In late August 1996, the KDP invited the Iraqi government to intervene in the KDP's war with the PUK. The coalition reacted by conducting Operation DESERT STRIKE in early September 1996 to increase the pressure on Iraq. This had some unintended consequences.

Operation DESERT STRIKE was a series of missile strikes in order to extend the SNFZ to the 33<sup>rd</sup> parallel. This meant that the coalition controlled Iraqi airspace as far north as Baghdad's suburbs. Correctly noting the implied threat to Baghdad, Iraqi forces challenged the SNFZ extension. This led the coalition to attempt to remove the air defence threat by threat and force of arms.

The Kurdish 'civil war' and DESERT STRIKE set in motion a chain of events that led to evacuation of a number of Kurds associated with NGOs operating in Iraqi 'Kurdistan'. These evacuations caused humanitarian operations in northern Iraq to end, which in turn caused the French government to withdraw from PROVIDE COMFORT II. DESERT STRIKE's long-term costs were considerable for the coalition both in diplomatic and political terms. Indeed it marked the beginning of fragmentation of the coalition that had stood in place since DESERT STORM.

#### Chronology

17 August 1996

The PUK allowed Iranian forces to pursue elements of the KDP-I in PUK-territory in exchange for arms.

22 August 1996

The KDP requested military assistance from the Iraqi government.

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31 August 1996	RGFC elements captured the city of Irbil in northern Iraq.
3 September 1996	American forces struck a series of air defence assets in southern Iraq using air- and sea-launched cruise missiles.
4 September 1996	The SNFZ was extended to the 33 <sup>rd</sup> parallel.
10 September 1996	The Iraqi government was warned not to rebuild its air defences in southern Iraq.
17-18 September 1996	QUICK TRANSIT I, the first of three evacuations of Kurdish refugees to Guam, was conducted.
22 October 1996	QUICK TRANSIT II occurred.
23 October 1996	The KDP and PUK agreed to a cease-fire.
25 November 1996	The 'Oil-for-Food' deal was revived.
4 December 1996	QUICK TRANSIT III occurred.
9 December 1996	SCR 986 came into effect.
27 December 1996	Displeased with the removal of the humanitarian element of PROVIDE COMFORT II, the French government withdrew its forces.
1 January 1997	PROVIDE COMFORT II became Operation NORTHERN WATCH.

### Catalyst/Cause for Coercion

The crisis developed as a result of the KDP-PUK conflict. After the formation of a national assembly in the spring of 1992, the two factions (both based on regional constituencies) shared power in a coalition government.



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The KDP controlled the western portion of Iraqi 'Kurdistan' bordering on Turkey. Trade in this area was greater than in the eastern, largely PUK-controlled portion of 'Kurdistan' bordering on Iran. The conflict started in 1994 over customs revenues, and: '... an important factor in the KDP-PUK battle for territory was to gain more opportunities for taxation and to bring more organisations under their control. Furthermore, the more people each side controlled, the greater their share of food and humanitarian supplies to be distributed in the region under the UN's plan ...'<sup>1</sup> Despite numerous cease-fire attempts, the conflict continued. On 17 August 1996, the Iranian government offered the PUK arms in exchange for the ability to cross PUK-held territory in pursuit of guerrillas from the KDP-I. The PUK immediately used their newly gained weapons in a series of attacks.<sup>2</sup> The KDP's leader, Massoud Barzani, sought outside assistance by inviting the Iraqi military to intervene.<sup>3</sup> Several RGFC divisions would help the KDP recapture the city of Irbil.

As tensions mounted in northern Iraq in late August 1996, Boaters Boaters-Ghali suspended the 'oil-for-food' deal, concerned that the safety of anyone employed to monitor the oil sales or distribute aid to the Kurds was in danger. Irbil was the intended hub of the aid distribution network under the 'deal'.<sup>4</sup> The 'deal' provided a humanitarian underpinning for actions that were less palatable to broader public opinion. Losing or diminishing the 'oil for food' deal risked a significant public relations set-back.

The coalition aim shifted throughout the crisis. At first, it sought to end to the KDP-PUK conflict through mediation, as this was a source of

<sup>1</sup> J. Barham, 'Hunger for war booty is driving fight between Kurds', ET, 10 September 1996.

<sup>2</sup> E. Mortimer, 'Saddam exploits Kurds' division', ET, 2 September 1996, and S. Myers, T. Weiner, J. Miller and E. Sciolino, 'A Failed Race Against Time: U.S. Tried to Head Off Iraqis', NYT, 5 September 1996.

<sup>3</sup> S. Myers, T. Weiner, J. Miller and E. Sciolino, 'A Failed Race Against Time: U.S. Tried to Head Off Iraqis', NYT, 5 September 1996.

<sup>4</sup> S. Myers, 'U.N. Halts Deal for Iraq As U.S. Pledges Action on Attack', NYT, 2 September 1996, DoS DPB, 11 September 1996, p. 17, and DoS DPB, 16 September 1996, p. 14.



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major embarrassment. The logic behind American policy toward the Kurds and Iraq was that although Saddam Hussein was undesirable, he should be overthrown from within Iraq. If the Kurds were engaged in internecine conflict, then they were not contributing to the future overthrow of Saddam Hussein. The Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Robert Pelletreau, was sent to try to bring about a cease-fire. After speaking to both Jalal Talabani, the PUK leader, and Massoud Barzani, Robert Pelletreau was able to convince both factions to meet in London.<sup>5</sup> The talks began on 23 August 1996, and the US State Department spokesman reported that the two parties agreed to a cease-fire and to return their forces to their previous positions.<sup>6</sup> Both the KDP and PUK broke the cease-fire shortly thereafter.

The US intelligence community became aware that the Iraqi government was moving forces northwards in response to Massoud Barzani's request, and suspected that this was not just an exercise. On 28 August 1996, the US government believed that 30,000 and 40,000 Iraqi troops were about to enter Kurdish territory.<sup>7</sup> The NSC presented a series of options which: '... developed the argument for our general strategic approach that we're using here, rather than responding tactically to a move by Saddam in the north to pick the time and place of our own choice for an adequate and measured response . . .'.<sup>8</sup> All American forces in the Gulf region went on alert.<sup>9</sup> The Clinton Administration was afraid of the indirect consequences of the Iraqi seizure of Irbil, as recalled by William Perry:

<sup>5</sup> 'Press Briefing by Mike McCurry and Mark Parris, Senior Director for Near East and South Asian Affairs', WHIPR, 3 September 1996, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Davies, 23 August 1996, p. 1, and S. Myers, T. Weiner, J. Miller and E. Sciolino, 'A Failed Race Against Time: U.S. Tried to Head Off Iraqis', NYT, 5 September 1996.

<sup>7</sup> 'Press Briefing by Mike McCurry and Mark Parris', pp. 1-3, and 'The United States responded with a hard line and dozens of cruise missiles to let him know, once again, he miscalculated the situation', Defense Issues, Vol. 11, No. 79, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> 'Background Briefing by Senior Administration Official', WHIPR, 31 August 1996, and McCurry and Parris, pp. 5-6.

<sup>9</sup> J. Adams, 'US jets poised for Iraq strike', Times, 1 September 1996.



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The Iraqis, emboldened by their success against the relatively weak PUK forces, might – if they saw no reaction from the international community – move to suppress both the PUK and KDP; or they might move against their neighbours to the south – as they did in August of 1990 and again in October of 1994. Without a military response, Saddam Hussein's position in the country and the region would be strengthened and vital interests to the United States could be threatened.<sup>10</sup>

As the conflict threatened the 'oil-for-food' deal and encouraged the Iraqi government to engage in military adventures, it posed a threat to stability. It was not possible for the American government to stand by and let a position develop in which Saddam Hussein was able to entrench greater control over the Iraqi people and greater control over the political and physical geography of Iraq. The American position was, of course, tendentious. On the one hand, they wanted to weaken Saddam Hussein's hold on his country. On the other, they were naturally anxious about being seen to meddle too overtly in the internal politics of Iraq. Such could be called into question as *ultra vires* the content of the relevant UN resolutions and thereby could unglue the coalition and also ran counter to general Arab feelings about the sovereignty of Iraq.<sup>11</sup>

On 30 August 1996, the Clinton Administration issued its first warning to Iraq. It warned that: ' . . . there would be serious, grave consequences for launching any type of offensive manoeuvre against Irbil . . .'.<sup>12</sup> It was a habit of the Iraqi government to refuse acceptance of messages from the United States, and this made communication difficult. Yet there could be no misconstruing of American action. As well as the alert of

<sup>10</sup> DoD News Briefing, 3 September 1996, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> The danger was that unity and control were being confused. It is possible to argue that if Iraq's armed forces were kept busy exercising control over Iraq, then they would be less able to project power into Iraq's neighbours.

<sup>12</sup> McCurry and Parris, p. 3.



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coalition military forces, aircraft sorties increased under both SOUTHERN WATCH and PROVIDE COMFORT II.<sup>13</sup>

Iraqi forces overran Irbil early on the morning of 31 August. They bombarded the city before dawn, and immediately after the barrage, Iraqi forces, spearheaded by a column of 60 tanks, seized control of the city.<sup>14</sup> Saddam Hussein ordered the Republican Guard to withdraw from Irbil on 1 September.<sup>15</sup> The Turkish government reported that the withdrawal was actually occurring, but the PUK and other resistance organisations claimed that Iraqi forces and the KDP were rounding up and massacring members of the Iraqi opposition.<sup>16</sup> This evidence increased the Pentagon's suspicion that the Iraqi government was leaving a residual security and intelligence presence.<sup>17</sup>

### Constraints

The 1996 Presidential election had a definite influence on the Clinton Administration's decision-making. First, President Clinton was sensitive to the effects of the crisis on polls and the opportunities it would create for his political opponents. President Clinton's Republican opponent, Senator Bob Dole, was very critical of the President's approach to Iraq during the campaign, and advocated a strong response to Iraq's action. Second, the Democratic Party National Convention forced President Clinton to delegate a number of tasks to members of his administration.<sup>18</sup> President Clinton

<sup>13</sup> McCurry and Parris, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> 'Press Briefing by Senior Administration Official', WHIPB, 31 August 1996, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> S. Myers, 'U.N. Halts Deal for Iraq As U.S. Pledges Action on Attack', NYT, 2 September 1996.

<sup>16</sup> S. Kinzer, 'Iraqi Troops Said to Round Up Kurd Leaders', NYT, 3 September 1996.

<sup>17</sup> E. Sciolino, 'Facing Saddam, Again', NYT, 4 September 1996, and T. Weiner, 'Iraq Pulling Out, But Leaving Spies Behind, U.S. Says', NYT, 6 September 1996.

<sup>18</sup> M. Fletcher, 'How Saddam's desert marauders ambushed Clinton campaign caravan', Times, 5 September 1996, McCurry and Parris, pp. 4-5, S. Myers, 'U.S. Calls Alert As Iraqis Strike A Kurd Enclave', NYT, 1 September 1996 and 'Pentagon Says Command Site Was Struck', NYT, 3 September 1996.



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discussed the options with Vice-President Al Gore, and on the evening of 2 September 1996, opted to use force.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, he: ‘. . . reaffirmed that vital national security interests of the United States in containing Iraq, and a key to that containment is the U.S. military presence in the region. In particular, the linchpin of that is what we call Operation SOUTHERN WATCH . . .’<sup>20</sup> The President defined the main American interests as the military containment of Iraq as opposed to the stability of northern Iraq.

This statement represented a major change in the American public posture. Initially, it had clothed its actions as saving the ‘oil for food’ programme. It had then moved its position to repelling the RGFC incursion into northern Iraq. The latter severely strained the ambit of the appropriate UN resolutions. The new position marked a move to an overt attempt to deny Saddam Hussein the control of Iraq he seemed to be wresting back. The ‘containment’ of Iraq required that Iraqi military aspirations in the north and the south had to be denied. This was, of course, a policy with considerable risk in terms of public relations and perceptions. It ran the risk of being attacked as a cynical abrogation of the initiatives for humanitarian relief and replacing them with objectives that lay squarely and almost exclusively with American interests.

Neither the British nor the French government wanted to intervene any further in the internal politics of Iraq, and nor did either want to engage in massive retaliation. Both governments tried to impress upon the US that the furthest they should go was an airstrike.<sup>21</sup> Iraqi forces, after all, had not acted outside Iraq’s borders, were invited by a Kurdish faction, and the incursion did not threaten, at least initially, regional stability. The French government publicly stated that the Iraqi incursion did not violate any of the UNSC

<sup>19</sup> McCurry and Parris, p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> Perry, in *DoD News Briefing*, 17 September 1996, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> J. Fitchett, ‘Keep Retaliation Limited, Allies Urge Clinton’, *III*, 3 September 1996.



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resolutions.<sup>22</sup> The Secretary-General recalled that: 'While Iraq's military move into the north was deplorable, it was, after all, an Iraqi government operation within the sovereign territory of Iraq.'<sup>23</sup> After all, even SCR 688 paid lip service to Iraq's sovereignty.<sup>24</sup> The French government was not the only one concerned about the situation. The Russian government agreed that action was required, but did not feel drastic measures were necessary.<sup>25</sup> The question was difficult and remains unanswered: does the mistreatment of one's population negate the legitimacy of the state's ability to maintain a monopoly of violence?

The Arab allies believed that action was necessary, but wanted to avoid exacerbating the crisis. In response to a question about the support of the regional allies, the Department of State spokesperson stated that:

. . . what I can tell you is that I don't believe you've seen any active opposition to the military move of the United States by those countries. We did have a variety of conversations with them preceding the attack. We let them know what, in a preliminary basis, some of our options were as we looked at the situation . . .<sup>26</sup>

The Saudi government forbade offensive operations being conducted from their soil, and the Turkish government feared that operations against Iraq would lead to another refugee crisis.<sup>27</sup> This severely limited the coalition's military operations.

There were two implicit aims to the strikes, which were to the support the military containment of Iraq through the SNFZ, and to rescue of the 'oil-for-food deal' by reversing Iraq's incursion in northern Iraq. There was

<sup>22</sup> DoS DPB, 3 September 1996, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Boutros-Ghali, p. 297.

<sup>24</sup> See p. 161 above.

<sup>25</sup> DoS DPB, 3 September 1996, p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> DoS DPB, 3 September 1996, p. 8.

<sup>27</sup> S. Myers, 'Pentagon Says Command Site Was Struck', NYT, 2 September 1996, E. Sciolino, 'Facing Saddam, Again', NYT, 4 September 1996, and White, p. 40.



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another, yet less obvious, aim of minimising the risk of casualties, be they American, coalition or Iraqi. This made target selection very difficult. If Iraqi casualties were a concern, strikes against Baghdad, the capital of Iraq and the heart of its government, would be unacceptable.<sup>28</sup> The President had already had a foretaste of the effect of American casualties on public perceptions. Earlier that year, Khobar Towers, an apartment building employed as an American military barracks near Riyadh, was bombed.<sup>29</sup> In one White House press briefing, it was noted that the President, during his meeting with Tony Lake and the JCS Director of Operations, Lieutenant General Peter Pace, USMC, wanted to minimise the amount of collateral damage and civilian casualties.<sup>30</sup> A choice of target that led to large numbers of Iraqi casualties would have been unacceptable to the Arab allies, and certainly odious to the remainder of the Islamic world as well as unpopular in Europe.

### Means and Target Sets

Political factors significantly constrained the coalition's actions. It could not employ air assets from within the theatre of operations. It could therefore only use air assets from 'over the horizon', carrier-based air assets or unmanned power. The use of carrier-based aviation required the striking aircraft to conduct airborne refuelling over Iraq, which would have been easy prey for the IADS and IQAF.<sup>31</sup> Air assets were also restricted to a rather narrow lane of entry and egress, which would make them easier targets for Iraqi air defences and increase the probability of coalition casualties. This did not meet President Clinton's guidance to the JCS Director of Operations, and this left only one means: unmanned power.

The further targeting strayed from installations clearly within the relevant UN resolutions, the more difficult the targeting became to support

<sup>28</sup> Horner, 'What We Should Have Learned', p. 55.

<sup>29</sup> See p. 82 above.

<sup>30</sup> McCurry and Parris, p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> Horner, 'What We Should', p. 4 and Byman and Waxman, p. 63.



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diplomatically and politically. The US certainly wished to diminish perceptions of itself as an aggressive bully. Yet equally it was sure that the situation warranted intervention on a larger scale than hitherto. In the light of the 'oil-for-food' proposal, it would have been counter-productive to attack any economic target (i.e. telecommunications, oil, economic infrastructure, and even industry). WMDs were not the focus of the crisis, and their value as a target set was reduced. The RGFC units in northern Iraq were not a feasible target given their mobility and the requirement to program missile guidance systems. This left the coalition with two choices for target sets: the Iraqi intelligence and security apparatus and air defence assets. Most of the intelligence and security apparatus can be found in Baghdad, and the implication of the President's guidance was that targets in that city were off-limits.<sup>32</sup> This left air defences as the only viable target set, and the coalition chose to send a combination of air- and sea-launched cruise missiles through the narrow gap to widen the approaches to Baghdad and implicitly threaten it.

### Analysis

The coalition reacted a day after the RGFC withdrew from Irbil. The President, after consulting with his advisors and allies, authorised the use of force while a pair of B-52 bombers from Guam flew towards the Persian Gulf.<sup>33</sup> As the bombers entered the airspace over the Gulf, they were joined by their escort, a number of F-14D aircraft from the aircraft carrier the USS Carl Vinson.<sup>34</sup> 31 T-LAMs were fired by the Carl Vinson's carrier group, and the B-52's had launched 13 Conventional Air-Launched Cruise Missiles (CALCM) at the targets: '. . . which included command and control nodes, missile launch sites and radar facilities key to the integrated air defence capability at Al Kut, Al Iskandariyah, An Nasiriyah and Tallil . . .'<sup>35</sup> The

<sup>32</sup> Horner, 'What We Should', p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> I. Brodie, M. Theodoulou and J. Sherman, 'Order to attack Saddam is signed', *Times*, 3 September 1996.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.cvn70.navy.mil/facts/cvn70.htm>.

<sup>35</sup> B. Starr, 'Clinton's line in the sand puts pressure on DoD', *JDW*, 11 September 1996.



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targets were hit at approximately 9:25 AM Baghdad time.<sup>36</sup> A second strike was ordered as there were four sites where the effect of the first series of strike had been questionable due to cloud cover over the target.<sup>37</sup> The USS Russell fired eight more Tomahawks, the USS Hewitt fired two others, five by the USS Laboon and the USS Jefferson City contributed two more missiles to the second strike.<sup>38</sup>

The American government deliberately chose to not focus on the problem in northern Iraq. William Perry and Vice-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph Ralston, USAF, claimed in a 3 September briefing that: ' . . . our response protects the United States interests by strengthening our ability to contain future Iraqi attacks. We have chosen the time, the place and the modality of our response to suit our strategic interests and our comparative advantage, not his . . .'<sup>39</sup> General Shalikashvili explained that:

. . . there had been a decision made that if the Iraqis ever tried something that would require the use of force, that the response should not be made to match the Iraqi actions. For example, if they attacked the Shi'a, we could respond anywhere we saw fit . . . We reserved the right to hit where it made sense to us, and that meant high-value targets . . .<sup>40</sup>

The strikes enabled the transformation of the SNFZ into a coercive instrument by expanding it to the 33<sup>rd</sup> parallel.

The President drew a distinction, however cosmetic, between the action to extend the SNFZ and the military strikes to make it effective, by stating that:

<sup>36</sup> 'Pentagon Says Command Site Was Struck', NYT, 3 September 1996.

<sup>37</sup> 'Press Briefing by Mike McCurry', WLPR, 3 September 1996.

<sup>38</sup> 'Statement by the Press Secretary', WLPR, 3 September 1996.

<sup>39</sup> William Perry, in 'The United States responded. . .', p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> Shalikashvili interview, p. 4.



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Our objectives are limited, but clear: to make Saddam pay a price for the latest act of brutality, reducing his ability to threaten his neighbours and America's interests. First we are extending the no-fly zone in southern Iraq. This will deny Saddam control of Iraqi airspace from the Kuwaiti border to the southern suburbs of Baghdad, and significantly restrict Iraq's ability to conduct offensive operations in the region. Second, to protect the safety of our aircraft enforcing the no-fly zone, our Cruise missiles struck Saddam's air defence capabilities in southern Iraq.<sup>41</sup>

Logically, of course, if not in terms of political presentation, one is the concomitant of the other given the prevailing situation. Ironically, what appeared to be a coercive act (the missile strikes) was really an act intended to enable an increase in the coercive value of the SNFZ. General Ralston stated: 'The message that we are sending to Saddam Hussein . . . That is, if he violates the norms that are expected, that he will suffer a penalty. In this particular case, he is suffering a penalty in loss of sovereignty over his airspace.'<sup>42</sup> A Department of State spokesman claimed that:

. . . we have attacked Saddam Hussein's centre, his strategic centre, the assets that are most precious to him -- command and control assets, anti-aircraft assets. We chose to react to the events of recent days by choosing targets that were in our interests to destroy. Those are the targets we destroyed. They weaken Saddam Hussein. They weaken him militarily, and, in a general sense, they reduce his ability to pose a threat to the region . . .<sup>43</sup>

The expansion of the SNFZ was a means of applying further pressure and the incursion provided an opportunity for the coalition to exploit. It also obviated the uncomfortable and undesirable position of having to pick a side in the Kurdish conflict.

It would be unwise, given the logistical requirements for the maintenance of the SNFZ, to enlarge the zone without guaranteeing the safety

<sup>41</sup> 'Statement by the President', WHIPR, 3 September 1996, p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> DoD News Briefing, 4 September 1996, p. 6.

<sup>43</sup> DoS DPB, 4 September 1996, p. 9.



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of the enforcing aircraft. General Ralston revealed how the operation affected the situation and the American reasoning behind their action:

. . . the rationale for this is the fact that our strategic interests of the United States [sic] are certainly to the south, and we want to make it as difficult as possible for Saddam in some unpredictable way to threaten his neighbours, certainly, to the south. By increasing the size of the no-fly zone that gives us additional warning; but more importantly, it significantly impacts his training of his armed forces and reduces their readiness.

In order to facilitate our pilots enforcing that no-fly zone, we wanted to do everything possible to reduce the risk to our aircrews. So our strikes yesterday were designed to reduce the threats to our airplanes and our pilots enforcing the no-fly zone. We had targeted surface-to-air missile sites as well as his integrated air defence network . . .<sup>44</sup>

There were some concerns associated with the strike and the extension. The 32<sup>nd</sup> parallel was originally chosen in order to ensure that the tanker orbits took place within the safety of Saudi airspace.<sup>45</sup> With the extension of the SNFZ and in particular because of the removal of hostile air defence assets, the coalition could risk putting tanker aircraft onto station within the zone, thus allowing for greater NFZ loiter times.

How effective were the strikes? The first strike was conducted using unmanned means, such as CALCMs and T-LAMs. Of the 13 CALCMs, eight of the 10 targets were struck, and three of the missiles failed their pre-launch inspections.<sup>46</sup> However, it was noted that: 'Part of the problem with the CALCMs were [sic] that they were fired at targets they were not intended to destroy, a product of hasty planning . . . The planning error occurred because no air component commander, with specialised knowledge of the effects of aerial weapons, was assigned by Central Command to help plan the mission.'<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Ralston, in DoD News Briefing, 4 September 1996, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> See p. 214 above.

<sup>46</sup> 'Pentagon bolsters force in Gulf as Iraq ignores warnings', JDW, 18 September 1996.

<sup>47</sup> D. Fulghum, 'Hard Lessons in Iraq Lead to New Attack Plan', AWST, 16 September 1996.



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This was a hastily planned strike forced by the coalition's strategy of asymmetrical response to Iraqi actions. Nine to 12 of the 14 T-LAMs hit their target on the first strike, and 12 to 15 of the second wave of 17 T-LAMs hit the target.<sup>48</sup> The hastiness of the operation meant that the T-LAMs were reliant on global positioning systems (GPS) as opposed to the digital terrain mapping normally used by the missile. This translated into a relative lack of accuracy.<sup>49</sup> Secretary Perry noted that these systems had a Circular Error Probable (CEP) of between 10 and 15 meters, and given that the warheads weighed 2,000 pounds in one case, and 1,000 in the other, they will have an effect on the target.<sup>50</sup> Given the popular perception of the T-LAM, it was necessary for the DoD to explain why it had not met all expectations. The executive officer of the US Navy's cruise missile office was quoted in the New York Times explaining some of the theory behind the employment of the missile, where it was necessary to fire: ' . . . multiple missiles on some aim points. And in the case of complex targets, they have chosen to go back and restrike . . .'<sup>51</sup> With complex targets, more would be required, and in the case of doubt, it would make sense to fire another salvo.<sup>52</sup>

Did the strikes improve the military situation? As already noted, the effectiveness of coalition aircraft in terms of the time to be spent in the SNFZ and their distance of penetration was increased. General Shalikashvili stated: 'Coupled with the extension of the southern no-fly zone up to the southern suburbs of Baghdad, this provided us with a better view of what was going on in Iraq. Combined with the no-drive zone, from a military point-of-view, it was a much better situation . . . Our ability to defend Kuwait had been increased.'<sup>53</sup> The extra space allowed the coalition to detect and react to threats to Kuwait with greater speed. Due to the extended range, aircraft

<sup>48</sup> 'Pentagon bolsters force'.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Perry & Portillo, p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> J. Cushman, 'Pentagon Defends Missile's Accuracy, NYT, 5 September 1996.

<sup>52</sup> Ralston, in DoD News Briefing, 4 September 1996, p. 4.



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enforcing the SNFZ could now easily strike at most of Iraq's air defence network.<sup>54</sup> With the southeastern air defence network out of operation, the allies would have a path, clear of opposition and even the means to detect incursions, to launch strikes at Baghdad.<sup>55</sup>

Viewed in the light of the SNFZ extension and its role in the American policy toward Iraq, one can discern that containment was the American objective. In his later statement to the House of Representatives International Relations Committee, Robert Pelletreau stated that:

Our policy is to contain Iraq, employing political, economic and military measures. This policy has enjoyed bipartisan support through two administrations . . . The key elements of containment are:

- inspections and monitoring by UNSCOM to prevent Iraq's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction;

- a strong UN sanctions regime;

- no-fly zones below the 33rd parallel and above the 36th parallel to prevent Iraq's use of airpower; and

- a no-drive zone pursuant to UNSCR 949, whereby Saddam is prohibited from reinforcing his ground forces in the south.<sup>56</sup>

The SNFZ extension was another means of placing pressure on Iraq to comply with SCR 687 and its antecedents. William Perry reiterated this by stating that: 'Our objective remains the same as it has been from the beginning, to deter Saddam Hussein from taking actions which commit atrocities to his own people, which attack his neighbours, and which upset

<sup>53</sup> Shalikashvili interview, pp. 4-5.

<sup>54</sup> B. Starr, 'Clinton's line in the sand puts pressure on DoD', *JDW*, 11 September 1996.

<sup>55</sup> E. Schmitt, 'Air Zone Enforced', *NYT*, 5 September 1996.

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.state.gov/www/regions/nca/960925.html>, p. 5.



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the security and stability of the region.’<sup>57</sup> A White House press spokesman, Mike McCurry, went further than William Perry, by claiming that:

One of our goals here was to not be fixated on responding to his tactical moves, nor towards the Kurds. There are a lot of practical and geopolitical reasons for that, but our interests were, first and foremost, to restrict his ability to pose further threat [sic] to international peace and security, consistent with U.N. Security Council resolutions, and also pose a threat to long-time allies of the United States in the region.<sup>58</sup>

If Iraqi compliance with UN resolutions could not be obtained, Iraq would still have to be contained.

The SNFZ extension provided evidence to support suspicions within the international community that the containment of Iraq was the only goal for the US-led coalition. This goal bore little relation to the humanitarian situation despite the public statements to the contrary. Marc Weller argued that: ‘In consequence, the humanitarian veneer which had covered the aerial exclusion zones was peeled off. It appeared that the worst fears of the opponents of a right of humanitarian “intervention” in international law were being fulfilled: the doctrine appeared to be abused by powerful states as a cover for power politics.’<sup>59</sup> This was a significant blow to the coalition’s public image, and another soon followed.

The allies were not exactly enthusiastic about the strikes and SNFZ extension. Despite its provision of logistical support of the first strike, namely the use of the airfield at Diego Garcia for refuelling aircraft for the B-52s, the British government was unimpressed with the NFZ extension. Initially, British forces were ordered not to enforce the extension, but this was rescinded shortly after.<sup>60</sup> The French government was unequivocal about its position, as ‘. . . *sa participation s’effectuera au sud du 32e parallèle* . . .’<sup>61</sup> The British

<sup>57</sup> Perry, in ‘Perry and Portillo’, *DoD News Briefing*, 4 September 1996, p. 4.

<sup>58</sup> McCurry, in McCurry and Parris, p. 8.

<sup>59</sup> Weller, ‘The US, Iraq and the Use of Force’, p. 95.



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government then tried to table a resolution at the Security Council that directly addressed the situation in northern Iraq.

The strikes and extension of the SNFZ proved to be rather unpopular with certain members of the UNSC. The Russian government was extremely upset by the strikes and called them 'disproportionate'.<sup>62</sup> It also made it known that it believed that any further actions should be authorised specifically by the UNSC.<sup>63</sup> The Chinese government had troubles of its own in Tibet and opposed the extension due to the potential precedent, and the Arab world recoiled from it, fearing it would fuel a fundamentalist backlash.<sup>64</sup> The British delegation to the UN continued to campaign for a draft resolution, but became caught up in a wrangle over the tone and language of its contents. The French, Chinese and Russian delegations to the UN wanted to weaken the condemnation of the Iraqi government and include a condemnation of the American strike and SNFZ extension to be included.<sup>65</sup> By 6 September, the British government gave up, and it seemed that any vestige of international recognition of the legality of the strikes was lost.<sup>66</sup>

The unusual legal justification for DESERT STRIKE led to a lack of consensus within the UNSC. The Clinton Administration maintained that the

<sup>60</sup> C. Whitney, 'Washington Is on Its Own: Allies Express Support But Shun Involvement', *III*, 4 September 1996. The British political and military support for the strikes can be found in: I. Black, 'US presses for support on Iraq', *Guardian*, 17 September 1996, M. Binyon, 'Rifkind backs blow against man who "cannot be trusted"', *Times*, 4 September 1996, 'Hawk Major stands alone', *Guardian*, 4 September 1996, and Perry and Portillo, p. 4.

<sup>61</sup> French Foreign Minister Hervé Charette, in '*France-États-Unis-Iraq-Communiqué du ministère des Affaires Étrangères*', 5 September 1996), *French EMPR*. The translation: '... its participation will occur to the south of the 32nd Parallel...'

<sup>62</sup> Lavrov cited in A. Mitchell, 'U.S. Continuing Bid to Smash Air Defense', *NYT*, 4 September 1996.

<sup>63</sup> Boutros-Ghali, p. 297.

<sup>64</sup> I. Black and M. Tran, 'Allies pin down Saddam's forces: Russia leads protests', *Guardian*, 6 September 1996, J. Bone, 'Allies out of step on text on UN resolution', *Times*, 5 September 1996, and 'Saddamned', *Economist*, 7 September 1996.

<sup>65</sup> B. Crossette, 'U.N. Council Members Negotiate, Fruitlessly', *NYT*, 6 September 1996.

<sup>66</sup> J. Bone and T. Rhodes, 'Britain gives up bid for UN unity against Saddam', *Times*, 7 September 1996, and 'Move to Censure Iraq Fails', *NYT*, 7 September 1996.



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incursion by Iraqi forces violated SCRs 688 and 678.<sup>67</sup> Hervé Charette, the French Foreign Minister, claimed on a number of occasions that Americans actions were neither justified nor authorised by the Security Council.<sup>68</sup> The jurisprudential basis of American action was, to say the least, shaky. It is a general principle of law that the legality of actions can only be determined by reference to governing law, or in this case to the legality and scope of the governing UN resolutions. The latter point has to be emphasised. UN resolutions are not of themselves necessarily legal. They can be subject to judicial test. Second, even if the resolutions are themselves legal, it is also a matter for judicial review whether particular actions fall properly within their ambit. It is clearly insufficient for legality that those taking action persuade themselves that the action is legal. It is also clearly insufficient to meet the test of legality that there be support by more than one party to the action, as this is collusion as opposed to legality. Thus the US found itself facing problems as a result of its action. The US defence was that the scope of UN resolutions gave empowerment for the action it undertook. Yet in significant measure, its adducement of legality apparently flowed from the fact that the majority of the coalition partners agreed that the action should be taken. This is a doubtful premise and, moving from the strictly legal argument, the premise became even weaker when members of the coalition themselves questioned the legality of action and took the stance that the UN resolutions provided insufficient legal cover for the actions actually taken.

The Turkish government was concerned about the situation in northern Iraq. Fears of terrorism prompted it to launch airstrikes against the PKK bases in northern Iraq.<sup>69</sup> In late September, the Turkish government

<sup>67</sup> DoS DPB, 3 September 1996, pp. 10 and 16, DoS DPB, 4 September 1996, p. 2, and McCurry and Parris, pp. 10-11.

<sup>68</sup> 'Entretien du ministre des Affaires étrangères, M. Hervé de Charette, avec "Europe 1"' (8 September 1996), *La Politique Étrangère de la France* (September-October 1996), p. 21, and '51<sup>e</sup> Assemblée générale des Nations unies-Entretien du ministre des Affaires étrangères, M. Hervé de Charette, avec la presse française' (24 September 1996), *La Politique Étrangère de la France* (September-October 1996), pp. 92-93.

<sup>69</sup> S. Kinzer, 'Turks, Opposing U.S., Urge Iraq To Take Control of Kurdish Area', *NYT*, 21 September 1996, 'Turkey to Keep Iraq Security Zone', 25 September 1996, and DoS DPB, 5 September 1996.



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informed its American counterpart of its intention to establish a 10-kilometer wide buffer zone along their border. The buffer zone was established within days.<sup>70</sup> Ankara was also concerned about the state of disorder, and sought to pre-empt a refugee crisis similar to that of March-April 1991.

The strikes were unpopular with the Gulf States, but the extension of the SNFZ itself met with approval and support. Both Kuwait and Bahrain agreed to greater numbers of American forces on their soils. Additional aircraft were based at Al Jaber Air Base in Kuwait, and Sheikh Isa Air Base in Bahrain.<sup>71</sup> The Saudi government supported the extension of the SNFZ and its relation to the policy of the containment of Iraq.<sup>72</sup> However, there were a number of reports that the strikes were not well-received in the Arab world.<sup>73</sup> While the popular reaction focussed on American imperialism or arrogance, the governmental reactions were less emotional. Most governments feared that the strikes would contribute to the growth of fundamentalism and the further erosion of Iraqi sovereignty.<sup>74</sup>

The strikes and extension failed to address the KDP-PUK conflict. Fighting continued in Sulaimaniyah on 6 September 1996.<sup>75</sup> The renewed fighting in northern Iraq led to another refugee crisis. On 9 September, the KDP captured Sulaimaniyah and the Lake Dokan dam.<sup>76</sup> A large number of refugees fled towards the Iranian border. The UN estimated that there were between 70,000 and 75,000, while the Iranian government thought there was

<sup>70</sup> 'U.S. Backs Turkish Troop Move', *NYT*, 8 September 1996,

<sup>71</sup> *DoD News Briefing*, 17 September 1996, pp. 2-3.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>73</sup> N. MacFarquhar, 'Foes Say Saddam's Gamble Paid Off', *NYT*, 7 September 1996, 'Mixed reaction in Arab capitals', *FT*, 4 September 1996, and C. Walker, 'Outrage in Arab world puts peace process at risk', *Times*, 4 September 1996.

<sup>74</sup> B. Crossette, 'Clinton Finds Little Support At the U.N. for Iraqi Strikes', *NYT*, 5 September 1996.

<sup>75</sup> H. Pope, 'Policing Saddam', *Independent*, 7 September 1996.

<sup>76</sup> J. Barham, E. Mortimer and P. Waldmeir, 'Saddam's Kurdish allies take key town', *FT*, 10 September 1996, D. Jehl, 'Faction of Kurds Supported by Iraq Takes Rival's City', *NYT*, 10 September 1996, and C. Nuttall, 'Iraq's Kurdish allies take key towns', *Guardian*, 9 September 1996.



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as many as 200,000.<sup>77</sup> The UNHCR dispatched some personnel to assist the Iranian government with its new problem.<sup>78</sup> The refugee crisis highlighted the problems associated with the 'Kurdish Civil War' by reinforcing the point that fighting hindered aid distribution. The PUK and KDP resumed fighting on 10 October.<sup>79</sup> Within four days, the PUK recaptured Sulaimaniyah.<sup>80</sup>

The American government tried frantically to obtain another cease-fire. The KDP-PUK conflict made it difficult for the American government to argue that the Iraqi government should not control the aid distribution in northern Iraq. The purpose of the cease-fire talks was to allow the 'oil-for-food' deal to go forward. Robert Pelletreau was able to get both parties to agree to talks on 16 October 1996.<sup>81</sup> The State Department stated that the talks were an attempt to bring about peace and secure guarantees from both parties that they would not seek Iraqi or Iranian intervention.<sup>82</sup> It did not appear hopeful. The fighting continued as the talks started, and on 18 October 1996, Koi Sanjaq fell yet again to the KDP.<sup>83</sup> Progress began to be made on the peace talks. By 23 October 1996, these talks led to a cease-fire and an agreement to continue with some reconciliation talks at a later date.<sup>84</sup> The cease-fire solidified when the parties agreed to the creation of a buffer zone and its monitoring.<sup>85</sup> This cease-fire removed the remaining obstacle for the 'oil-for-food' deal. A few weeks later, the deal was revived and agreed

<sup>77</sup> D. Jehl, 'Fearful Kurds Huddle at Iran's Closed Door', *NYT*, 11 September 1996, and M. Theodoulou, 'Tehran begs for help as Kurds flood to border', *Times*, 11 September 1996.

<sup>78</sup> *DoS DPB*, 12 September 1996, pp. 4-5.

<sup>79</sup> *DoS DPB*, 9 October 1996, p. 18, *DoS DPB*, 10 October 1996, p. 10.

<sup>80</sup> D. Hirst, 'Saddam's Kurdish foes retake city', *Guardian*, 14 October 1996, 'Kurdish Faction Recaptures Stronghold of Iraq-Aided Rivals', *NYT*, 14 October 1996, and M. Theodoulou, 'Vital Kurdish city is recaptured by anti-Saddam group', *Times*, 14 October 1996.

<sup>81</sup> *DoS DPB*, 16 October 1996, p. 9.

<sup>82</sup> 'Rival Kurds Open Peace Talks', *IHT*, 31 October 1996.

<sup>83</sup> *DoS DPB*, 18 October 1996, p. 3.

<sup>84</sup> S. Myers, 'Kurd Rivals in North Iraq Said to Agree to Cease-Fire', *NYT*, 24 October 1996.

<sup>85</sup> S. Erlanger, 'Kurdish Factions Extend Cease-Fire in Iraq: U.S. Still Cautious', *NYT*, 1 November 1996.



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upon by both the UN and Iraq.<sup>86</sup> On 10 December 1996, oil was flowing through the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipeline, as Iraqis rejoiced.<sup>87</sup> This would reduce the human cost of sanctions, and prevent a further decline in the American image on the international scene.

Did the SNFZ extension have an effect on Iraq's actions? The new zone came into effect at noon (GMT) on 4 September 1996. Prior to this, between 20 and 25 Iraqi fighters were moved to airfields in central Iraq.<sup>88</sup> The Iraqi government seemed prepared to deny battle and accept the new scope of the SNFZ. The JTF-SWA ordered that coalition aircraft not fly below 20,000 feet in order to avoid AAA and Roland fire.<sup>89</sup> At the end of the first mission to fly north of the 32nd parallel, two MiG-29s challenged the extension by flying south of the 33rd parallel, and then fled before any allied aircraft could attack them.<sup>90</sup> On 11 September, two SA-6s fired at a pair of F-16s over the NNFZ. Two F-15Es were dispatched to destroy the launchers, but they failed to find the target.<sup>91</sup> A day later, the Iraqis fired three missiles in the SEZ, but there were no allied aircraft in the vicinity.<sup>92</sup> The aforementioned incidents were tests of coalition will and capability to enforce the existence of the NFZs. At the same time, the Iraqi government tried to repair their damaged air defence network. On 10 September, General Shalikashvili stated that: 'We have warned Saddam that any attempt to repair those sites or to reinforce them will be taken very seriously, and he must understand the

<sup>86</sup> B. Crossette, 'Iraq and U.N. Make Deal on Oil Sales for Aid', NYT, 26 November 1996.

<sup>87</sup> J. Bone, 'UN authorises "oil for food" deal', Times, 10 December 1996.

<sup>88</sup> E. Schmitt, 'Air Zone Enforced', NYT, 5 September 1996, and Ralston, in DoD News Briefing, 4 September 1996.

<sup>89</sup> White, p. 41.

<sup>90</sup> Perry and Portillo, p. 1, Schmitt, 'Air Zone', and White, p. 42.

<sup>91</sup> P. Shenon, 'U.S. Is Preparing Bigger Air Strikes On Targets In Iraq', NYT, 12 September 1996.

<sup>92</sup> P. Shenon, 'U.S. Sends Another Carrier To Bolster Mideast Forces', NYT, 13 September 1996.



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consequences.<sup>93</sup> The immediate consequence was that the might engage in another series of strikes.

The American government began to deploy some of its forces after the second warning. Four B-52s were moved to Diego Garcia, and the USS Enterprise and its battle group, which was augmented with several warships. The third brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division began to fly over to Kuwait several days later, as well as a Patriot battery.<sup>94</sup> Saddam Hussein ordered a halt to the attacks on 13 September.<sup>95</sup> This was Iraq's concession to the pressure of the combination of the strikes, the expansion of the SNFZ, and the deployment of an American armoured brigade. The deployments continued because they believed that Iraq was continuing to threaten the aircraft enforcing the NFZs. There were two reasons for this belief. First, the Kuwaiti government became concerned after the Iraqi Prime Minister Tariq Aziz had made some threatening public statements.<sup>96</sup> Second, the US, having wrecked the fixed air defence missile launchers, wanted the Iraqis to reveal their mobile launchers.<sup>97</sup> This would obviate any chance of allied aircraft being unpleasantly surprised. Given the Iraqi track record on compliance, this was futile. It was only in mid-September that Saddam Hussein ordered a halt to resistance to the enforcement of the NFZs. It is not entirely clear why the decision was made, but the timing of the decision is consistent with the announcements of deployments of American forces to the Gulf. It is likely

<sup>93</sup> Shalikashvili cited in M. Fletcher, and M. Theodoulou, 'Clinton is ready to make Saddam pay "hell of a price"', *Times*, 10 September 1996. See also: *DoS DPB*, 10 September 1996, p. 3, and *DoS DPB*, 11 September 1996.

<sup>94</sup> Major General L. Laporte, U.S. Army, and Major M. Cummings, U.S. Army, 'Prompt Deterrence: The Army in Kuwait', *MR*, Vol. LXXVII, No. 6 (November-December 1997), p. 39, N. MacFarquhar, 'U.S. Warning Iraq That New Attacks Are Still Possible', *NYT*, 16 September 1996, 'Pentagon bolsters force in Gulf as Iraq ignores warnings', *JDW*, 18 September 1996, P. Shenon, 'U.S. Sends Another Carrier To Bolster Mideast Forces', *NYT*, 13 September 1996, and M. Walker and I. Black, 'US ups stakes against Iraq', *Guardian*, 13 September 1996.

<sup>95</sup> P. Shenon, 'Iraq Orders Halt To Missile Strikes on American Jets', *NYT*, 14 September 1996, and M. Theodoulou and M. Evans, 'Baghdad halts attacks on coalition air patrols', *Times*, 14 September 1996.

<sup>96</sup> *DoD News Briefing*, 17 September 1996, pp. 5-6.

<sup>97</sup> P. Shenon, 'Iraq Has Not Fully Met Demands, U.S. Says', *NYT*, 16 September 1996.



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that the Iraqi government was sensitive to large deployments, and perceived them as a prelude to the renewal of hostilities.

Another second-order effect of this crisis was the American decision to end its participation in the relief operations associated with PROVIDE COMFORT ahead of schedule. Since the RGFC's incursion into Iraqi 'Kurdistan', any American presence in northern Iraq, whether for aid or not, was unwelcome. The Clinton Administration stated that its direct support would end, but its support for the relief organisations would continue.<sup>98</sup> Worse yet, those Kurds that had worked closely with American organisations were probable targets for retribution by the Iraqi government. A day later, the Clinton Administration announced that it would evacuate approximately 2,000 of their Kurdish employees and INC members.<sup>99</sup> The first evacuation, labelled Operation QUICK TRANSIT, began on 16 September 1996.<sup>100</sup> This evacuation was completed by the end of the month.

The American government began to consider the merits of a second evacuation. This meant that NGOs associated with the American government would leave northern Iraq.<sup>101</sup> QUICK TRANSIT II began on 19 October, and this time, it consisted of 600 people associated with the INC.<sup>102</sup> The American government sought to prevent the collapse of the Iraqi opposition. The evacuations had a deleterious effect. The French government stated that if PROVIDE COMFORT II lost its humanitarian aspect, it would withdraw its forces from that operation.<sup>103</sup> Without this

<sup>98</sup> S. Myers, 'U.S. Seeks To End Direct Aid For Kurds', *NYT*, 12 September 1996.

<sup>99</sup> *DoS DPB*, 11 September 1996, pp. 14-15.

<sup>100</sup> *DoS DPB*, 16 September 1996, pp. 5-6.

<sup>101</sup> *DoS DPB*, 20 September 1996, p. 8, and *DoS DPB*, 25 September 1996, p. 8.

<sup>102</sup> *DoS DPB*, 21 October 1996, p. 7.

<sup>103</sup> 'Entretien accordée par le ministre délégué aux Affaires européennes, M. Michel Barnier, au quotidien "Turkish Daily News", *La Politique Étrangère De La France: Textes et Documents* (September-October 1996), (Paris: French Foreign Ministry, 1996), p. 218. See also: 'Kurdistan iraquien-Communiqué du ministère des Affaires étrangères', 2 November 1996, *French EMPR*. The loss of infrastructure was noted in C. Nuttall, 'Relief from Iraqi oil sales "at risk"', *Guardian*, 6 December 1996.



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'legitimising' part of the operation, consensus soon evaporated. The Clinton Administration announced in late November that it was going to conduct a third evacuation. This time, 5,000 people who worked for the NGOs during PROVIDE COMFORT II would be evacuated in QUICK TRANSIT III.<sup>104</sup> This began in 4 December 1996. The Acting Department of State Spokesman, John Dinger, announced on Christmas Day that: 'Because of changes to the mission as a result of the closing last fall of the Military Command Centre in Zakho, and the end of humanitarian assistance in the north under UNSCR 986 to international organisations, the title "Provide Comfort" will no longer be used.'<sup>105</sup> This signified the end of the humanitarian relief operations mandated by PROVIDE COMFORT II.

The French government withdrew from PROVIDE COMFORT II due to the cessation of relief operations in northern Iraq. It announced that on 1 January 1997, French aircraft would no longer enforce the NNFZ.<sup>106</sup> Without the humanitarian element, the French government would not participate any longer. PROVIDE COMFORT II became Operation NORTHERN WATCH.

### Conclusion

DESERT STRIKE was intended to provide a coalition response to Iraq's intervention in the KDP-PUK conflict. Iraq's choice was limited by its withdrawal from Irbil before the attack. The SNFZ extension was more-or-less a reprisal as opposed to an act of coercion. The extension completed the transformation of the SNFZ into a coercive instrument, but the coalition appeared to be ill prepared for actions in northern Iraq, thus weakening the

<sup>104</sup> DoS DPB, 26 November 1996, p. 19. See also: [http://www.incirlik.af.mil/history/CTF\\_pc.htm](http://www.incirlik.af.mil/history/CTF_pc.htm) for statistics on all three airlifts, 'US completes Kurdish airlift', *Guardian*, 17 December 1996, and 'US to evacuate aid workers from Iraq', *Guardian*, 27 November 1996.

<sup>105</sup> 'Extension of Coalition Air Operation Over Northern Iraq', *U.S. Department of State Press Statement*, 25 December 1996.

<sup>106</sup> 'Participation française aux dispositifs "Provide Comfort" et "Southern Watch" – Communiqué du ministère des Affaires étrangères' (27 December 1996), *La Politique Étrangère De La France: Textes et Documents* (November-December 1996), (Paris: French Foreign Ministry, 1996), p. 309.



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credibility of its threats. The SNFZ extension seemed to imply the coalition's preparedness to attack Baghdad, and the Iraqi government seemed to act on this threat, and sought to escalate, thus requiring another threat by end-September. The second and third order effects of the crisis offered some hope to the Iraqi government. These effects included the French government's refusal to enforce the extension, the American QUICK TRANSIT series of operations and the French concern about the abandonment of humanitarian efforts in northern Iraq. Despite claims to the contrary, the coalition's overall capability was constrained politically. Such constraints meant that it was unable to strike the RGFC in northern Iraq. The coalition chose to attack air defence assets, a target set of limited significance, in a scheme of incremental escalation. This satisfied Clinton Administration criteria but failed as a coercive operation.


It is a matter of fact that the SNFZ was extended and coalition aircraft were enabled to operate within its confines with relative impunity. It is also a fact that this was achieved at a cost. The NNFZ was almost ignored by the United States and the result of that in combination with the action in the South was to alienate France, and in the end, to cause their virtual withdrawal from the coalition. The creation of Operation NORTHERN WATCH was a direct result of the Iraqi intervention and not the coalition's actions on 3 September. While the increase in Iraq's containment was achieved, it was at the expense of the weakening of the coalition. Saddam Hussein's capacity to harass Kuwait was reduced by the extension of the SNFZ and to that extent that strand of the strategy was also successful.

With respect to the inhibition of action by the Iraqi government, the situation is much more confused. The strikes seem to have failed to alter Iraqi actions as they were a retaliatory act. The RGFC was ordered to withdraw before the strikes. There were north and eastwards movements of Iraqi forces



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along the roads from Kirkuk towards Chamchamal and Sulaimaniyah.<sup>107</sup> Its presence still lingered there and at least a battalion of troops camped near Qosh Tepe, 15 miles southeast of Irbil, for a week after the strike.<sup>108</sup> These forces later withdrew to the south. DESERT STRIKE meant that Iraq would incur a high cost if, in the future, it tried to move back into the SNFZ. This was true as regards incursion by aircraft, but even more true if the Iraqis tried to rebuild air defence capability. However, in terms of cost to the Iraqi military machine, the costs apart from the loss of assets, was minimal. The extension of the no-fly zone did not impose any direct and unavoidable cost on Iraq, provided that it was content that the enlarged SNFZ should exist. While it was another 'turn of the screw' on Iraq, it was still insufficient pressure to cause the Iraqi government to comply with the UN resolutions.



<sup>107</sup> 'Press Briefing by Mike McCurry', WHPB, 3 September 1996, p. 2, and M. Theodoulou, 'Saddam's tanks push on despite pullout claim', Times, 2 September 1996.

<sup>108</sup> D. Jehl, 'Some Iraqis Are Still Dug In Inside the Kurdish Region', NYT, 8 September 1996, and P. Shenon, 'Pentagon Sees Slim Chance of U.S. War Role in Northern Iraq', NYT, 9 September 1996.







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Throughout 1997 and 1998, Iraq exploited every opportunity to hinder UNSCOM's inspections and end the regime of sanctions. The coalition reacted by planning operations against Iraq, but inevitably, these were cancelled due to international opposition. By late 1998, the international community was frustrated enough to have UNSCOM conduct a test of Iraq's compliance with a view to ending sanctions. Iraq failed to comply, and this led to the coalition's conduct of Operation DESERT FOX, a four-day-long bombing campaign in December 1998. Not focusing solely on air defence assets, DESERT FOX was intended to be more prolonged and devastating. The coalition was determined to remind Iraq that its disarmament would occur, either peacefully or by force. DESERT FOX was hailed as a victory by the American and British governments, but it failed to achieve its aim of obtaining Iraqi compliance with UN resolutions. Iraqi resistance, both political and military, increased as a result.

#### Chronology

June 1997

A series of incidents occurred where UNSCOM inspection teams were hindered or denied access to inspection sites.

September 1997

On three separate occasions, the Iraqi government denied UNSCOM access to inspection sites because they were considered 'Presidential Sites'.

23 October 1997

The UNSC stated that it would impose a travel ban on all Iraqi government or



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military officials until 11 April 1998 unless Iraq co-operated.

30 October 1997

The Iraqi government demanded that American members of UNSCOM leave Iraq within seven days. It also barred two American arms inspectors from re-entering Iraq after a vacation.

12 November 1997

The UNSC imposed a travel ban on Iraqi officials.

23 November 1997

The Iraqi government announced that any palaces and presidential sites would remain off-limits to UNSCOM inspection teams.

December 1997

Despite delays and interference, several 'off-limits' sites were inspected despite the Iraqi pronouncement of 23 November, and UNSCOM reported that there was evidence that material had been removed.

12 January 1998

The Iraqi government announced that it would bar UNSCOM's inspection team led by Scott Ritter, an American, as it contained too many American and British citizens and was therefore biased or spying.

14 January 1998

Following an Iraqi government protest about the inspection team having too many Americans, the American government stated that it was prepared to allow changes to the team.

The Russian Foreign Minister contacted the American Secretary of State to register his government's opposition to the use of force.

15 January 1998

Both the French and Russian governments offered to replace the American and British members of the Ritter team with their own nationals.



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- 16 January 1998 In order to break the deadlock, the UN offered to accelerate UNSCOM's activities and allow Iraqi participation.
- 19-21 January 1998 The UNSCOM Executive Chairman, Richard Butler, held two days of talks with the Iraqi government. He was unable to obtain Iraqi permission for access to 'presidential' sites, but did obtain an agreement on the use of technical experts for third-party assessments.
- 22 January 1998 The Russian and Chinese government urged the UNSC to certify that Iraq had halted its nuclear programs despite UNSCOM's claims to the contrary.
- 23 January 1998 Richard Butler briefed the UNSC on the 19-21 January talks, and claimed that with Iraq's activities, UNSCOM was unable to fulfil its mandate.
- 26 January 1998 The Russian government sent its Deputy Foreign Minister, Viktor Posuvalyuk to Iraq to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis.
- 29-31 January 1998 Madeleine Albright, the American Secretary of State, travelled to Europe to meet with the British, French, Russian, and other European governments in order to obtain support for contingency operations against Iraq.
- 1 February 1998 Both the Egyptian and Saudi governments called for a diplomatic solution to the crisis. The latter refused to allow any strikes to be conducted from its territory due to political sensitivities.
- 3 February 1998 The British government announced it would also participate in military operations against Iraq if required.



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	The Chinese government announced its opposition to the use of force.
4 February 1998	The Iraqi government offered to open eight 'presidential' sites for one month, and the American government rejected the offer.
5 February 1998	The French government refused to participate in any military action against Iraq.
11 February 1998	The Iraqi government expanded its earlier offer to 60 days.
12 February 1998	William Cohen, the American Secretary of Defense, visited Russia, and was told that if offensive operations were conducted against Iraq, it would damage Russo-American relations.
20 February 1998	Kofi Annan visited Baghdad to meet with the Iraqi government to reach a diplomatic solution and discuss the 'oil-for-food' deal.
22 February 1998	After a meeting with Saddam Hussein, Kofi Annan announced that he had reached a deal with the Iraqi government that resolved the crisis.
30 March 1998	Richard Butler reported to the UNSC that Iraq still needed to provide more details with regard to its FFCDs on its chemical projects, especially its projects on VX, a deadly nerve gas.
9 April 1998	UNSCOM reported that it suspected that Iraq was concealing its biological warfare programs. Technical evaluations proved the Iraqi declarations to be in error or false.
13 April 1998	The IAEA announced that Iraq had complied with all requirements pertaining to its former nuclear weapons program.



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- 2 June 1998 UNSCOM announced its concern about Iraq's accounting of missile warheads.
- 5 July 1998 Talks between UNSCOM and the Iraqi government on the remaining requirements for a lifting of sanctions ended abruptly with the Iraqi rejection of all of Richard Butler's proposals for UNSCOM's activities.
- 29 July 1998 The Russian government, with the support of its French and Chinese counterparts, proposed a SCR stating that Iraq had complied with its obligations under SCR 687 for the destruction of its nuclear arsenal.
- 5 August 1998 The Iraqi government announced that it would cease to cooperate with UNSCOM. It would, however, allow monitoring by cameras to continue.
- 9 September 1998 The UNSC adopted SCR 1194 that condemned Iraq's lack of co-operation and suspended all sanctions review until Iraq co-operated.
- 5 October 1998 Following a visit by Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Kofi Annan outlined to the UNSC a 'comprehensive review' of Iraqi compliance with SCR 687 if Iraq co-operated with UNSCOM. The review would see Iraq providing an accurate count of its arsenal, which UNSCOM would reconcile with its accounts on a deadline.
- 6 October 1998 Richard Butler stated in his October review of UNSCOM's progress that Iraq was close to fulfilling its requirements for ballistic missiles and chemical weapons, but discrepancies remained in the area of biological weapons.



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30 October 1998	The UNSC completed the proposal of the 'comprehensive review'. Iraq announced that it would no longer cooperate with UNSCOM unless Butler was fired and sanctions were lifted.
Early November 1998	The US reinforced the JTF-SWA with the USS Enterprise carrier battle group and 129 extra aircraft.
15 November 1998	President Clinton called off a series of air strikes at the last minute after being notified that the Iraqi government agreed to cooperate with UNSCOM.
17 November 1998	UNSCOM began a series of inspections designed to test Iraq's claims.
25 November 1998	Citing national security concerns, the Iraqi government refused to hand over a series of documents to UNSCOM.
9 December 1998	An UNSCOM inspection team was denied access to a <i>Ba'ath</i> party office. The Iraqi government later declared all party offices to be off-limits to UNSCOM.
11 December 1998	An UNSCOM team was denied access to an inspection site due to the Islamic sabbath.
15 December 1998	Richard Butler submitted his findings to the UNSC.
16 December 1998	As the UNSC debated Butler's findings, the coalition members launched DESERT FOX. The operation lasted until the night of 19 December 1998 (Baghdad time).
23 December 1998	Iraqi resistance continued over both NFZs, where aircraft and AAA were employed against the coalition.



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### Catalyst/Cause for Coercion

From late 1996, many saw the coalition's activities as a merciless system of containment. The international community no longer believed that the coalition's humanitarian justifications were genuine. The coalition's support of UNSCOM consisted mainly of the threats about the use of force. However, threats relied on the coalition's credibility. This relied upon international support, which had declined since DESERT STRIKE.<sup>1</sup> This was due to a genuine scepticism about the coalition's claims of a humanitarian basis for their actions, the bluntness of sanctions, and the popular sympathy within the Arab world for the plight of the Iraqi people.

One of UNSCOM's major concerns in 1997 and 1998 was that the Iraqi government was concealing its WMD programmes in order to maintain, at least in some form, its arsenal. Scott Ritter noted that:

From the outset he [Saddam Hussein] decided to outwit the disarmament provisions of the Security Council Resolution. Immediately after the adoption of 687, an emergency committee, chaired by Tariq Aziz and loosely-based on the SSO [Special Security Organisation] Committee, met in Baghdad to craft Iraq's response . . . The committee had clear instructions from Saddam Hussein: save as much of the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction capability as possible.<sup>2</sup>

In 1997, UNSCOM strongly suspected that a conspiracy existed to conceal Iraqi WMDs, and imagery taken during inspections in 1991, 1996 and 1997 provided further evidence.<sup>3</sup> Iraqi behaviour during the summer of 1997 led to greater suspicion. UNSCOM reported that: 'In June 1997, the

<sup>1</sup> Cockburn and Cockburn, p. 264.

<sup>2</sup> Ritter, p. 105. The SSO (*Amn Al Khass*) is an Iraqi security organisation that deals with 'presidential' affairs, such as the quest for WMDs and the protection of the leadership of Iraq.

<sup>3</sup> S/1999/94, p. 175. The imagery from 1991 was taken prior to, during and after the incidents at Abu Gharaib (23 June 1991) and Al Fallujah (28 June 1991). See: ΔCR 1991, pp. 453.B.116.2 to 453.B.116.5.



Commission experienced delays and obstructions throughout the inspections including the removal of material from sites . . . given the information about concealment practices and the absence of evidence about their termination, the Commission believed it had no choice but to continue.<sup>4</sup> Inspections during August and September 1997 confirmed the existence of a conspiracy. This led to the decision to remove Iraq's curtain of deception.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of the decision to change approaches, UNSCOM became more intrusive, and the patience of the international community with Iraq grew thin. The coalition (now consisting primarily of the US and UK) remained hesitant to use force due to concerns about French, Chinese and Russian opposition.<sup>6</sup> While these governments did not support Iraq's obstructive tactics, they were equally, if not more, opposed to the use of force against Iraq. Other means were therefore required. The first censure was SCR 1134 (23 October 1997) which threatened a travel ban, and this ban was imposed in SCR 1137 (12 November 1997).<sup>7</sup> Richard Butler, Rolf Ekeus' successor as Executive Chairman of UNSCOM, noted that: ' . . . this action sent the clearest possible signal to Iraq -- namely that the Security Council was wavering in its resolve to enforce its own law . . .'.<sup>8</sup> The Iraqi government's response to SCR 1137 was to order the ejection of any American citizens employed by UNSCOM from Iraq. Richard Butler, fearing for UNSCOM's unity should only the Americans be ejected, ordered a complete withdrawal to Bahrain. The French, Russian, and Chinese governments heavily criticised the move.<sup>9</sup> The coalition seriously considered force, but this was averted by

<sup>4</sup> S/1999/94, p. 176.

<sup>5</sup> S/1999/94, p. 177.

<sup>6</sup> The French government continued to participate in Operation SOUTHERN WATCH after withdrawing from Operation PROVIDE COMFORT II.

<sup>7</sup> Security Council Resolution 1134, S/RES/1134 (1997), 23 October 1997, and Security Council Resolution 1137, S/RES/1137 (1997), 12 November 1997.

<sup>8</sup> Butler, p. 91.

<sup>9</sup> Butler, pp. 102-104.



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Russian intervention.<sup>10</sup> Iraq avoided another series of strikes while weakening the political status of the coalition, thus gaining a political victory.

The Iraqi government quickly returned to its old ways. The Iraqis denied access to some 'presidential sites', and this led to the American reconsideration of the use of force.<sup>11</sup> In late November 1997, support for the coalition using force against Iraq was non-existent. A number of Gulf State governments made it known that the use of force was unacceptable, fearing that an attack on Iraq would derail the Middle East Peace Process.<sup>12</sup> The French and Russian governments made it clear that they would veto any UNSC authorisation of force.<sup>13</sup>

The US, UK, and a number of their allies prepared for the use of force against Iraq in an operation dubbed DESERT THUNDER in early 1998. Yet it was evident that many states, including the other P-5 members, were opposed to the use of force due to the effects of sanctions.

In addition to the significant opposition to a military operation against Iraq, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, offered to mediate between Iraq and the coalition. The Secretary-General and his staff wanted to resolve the crisis peacefully. Richard Butler claimed this desire was so compelling that they: '... detached the goal of conflict resolution ... from the fundamental requirement of disarming Iraq ...'<sup>14</sup> This naturally impacted negatively on the political support offered to UNSCOM.

By mid-February 1998, even President Clinton favoured a diplomatic solution due to the lack of international support for the use of force. Scott Ritter noted acerbically that: 'In allowing Madeleine Albright to encourage the

<sup>10</sup> S. Erlanger, 'Use of Force Avoided', *III*, 24 November 1997.

<sup>11</sup> 'Saddam's "Brinkmanship" Draws New U.S. Warning', *III*, 17 December 1997.

<sup>12</sup> D. Jehl, 'Arabs Concerned Clinton Could Lose His Focus on Peace in the Mideast', *III*, 28 January 1998.

<sup>13</sup> Cockburn and Cockburn, p. 272 and 275.



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mission of Kofi Annan to Baghdad in February 1998, the Clinton Administration set the stage for the full endorsement of the Memorandum of Understanding, with its self-defeating secret protocol.<sup>15</sup> This 'secret protocol' allowed the inspections of presidential sites to occur once only, and the Secretary-General would work towards a lift of the sanctions on Iraq.<sup>16</sup> Kofi Annan's MoU saw the Iraqi government reconfirm its acceptance of SCRs 687 and 715, and grant access to the 'presidential sites' in exchange for the inspection of said sites by a 'Special Group' consisting of a number of diplomats and technical experts.<sup>17</sup> The results of Kofi Annan's visit were popular both within the UNSC and the international community.<sup>18</sup> On 2 March 1998, the UNSC endorsed the Secretary-General's deal, therefore, authorising the plan contained within it, 'secret protocol' and all.<sup>19</sup>

This came at a very difficult time. While the deal appeared to lead to some form of Iraqi co-operation, there remained some concerns. For example, the Technical Expert Mission for BW noted that previous FFCD were incomplete and inaccurate in many areas, including the history of the programme, its organisation and acquisition procedures.<sup>20</sup> UNSCOM's consolidated report of April 1998 noted that it would be unable to fulfil its mandate for the destruction of ballistic missiles as well as chemical and biological weapons.<sup>21</sup> The IAEA reported that there were no problems with

<sup>14</sup> Butler, p. 129.

<sup>15</sup> Ritter, p. 190.

<sup>16</sup> Ritter, p. 182.

<sup>17</sup> 'Letter Dated 25 February 1998 From the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council', S/1998/166 (27 February 1998).

<sup>18</sup> C. Wren, 'Security Council Supports Iraq Accord', *IIII*, 25 February 1998.

<sup>19</sup> Security Council Resolution 1154, S/RES/1154 (2 March 1998).

<sup>20</sup> 'Letter dated 8 April 1998 from the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission Established by the Secretary-General Pursuant to Paragraph 9 (b) (i) of Security Council Resolution 687 (1991) Addressed to the President of the Security Council', 8 April 1998, pp. 3-10.

<sup>21</sup> 'Note by the Secretary-General', S/1998/332 (16 April 1998), pp. 7-14.



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access or evidence of concealment of nuclear activities.<sup>22</sup> This complicated the issue, as it was not completely clear what Iraq still possessed.

UNSCOM tried to obtain Iraqi co-operation throughout the spring and summer of 1998 in the formulation and implementation of a schedule for UNSCOM's inspection and final activities. This effort ended by August 1998 due to Iraqi demand for a lifting of sanctions unless UNSCOM proved an Iraqi arsenal still existed.<sup>23</sup> The coalition suspected that, by speaking out without being able to use force, it risked a further loss of credibility. It was therefore necessary to set the stage for future uses of force. The first step was SCR 1194 (9 September 1998), which suspended any review of sanctions until the Iraqi government decided to cooperate with UNSCOM.<sup>24</sup> This was a step towards a peaceful solution in order to avoid violence.

By autumn 1998, the key issues were the states of the Iraqi chemical and biological arsenals. Richard Butler held the opinion that:

. . . the disarmament phase of the Security Council's requirements is possibly near its end in the missile and chemical weapons areas but not in the biological weapons area; Iraq is permitting the monitoring work of the Commission to be exercised only at a less than satisfactory level, yet its development is vital to the future; and full disclosure by Iraq of all necessary materials and information remains the crucial ingredient for both an end to the disarmament process and future monitoring . . .<sup>25</sup>

A Technical Expert Mission (TEM) had been undertaken earlier that year to evaluate Iraqi claims that VX had never been weaponised. By late October, this TEM found evidence of degraded VX in warheads and therefore concluded that the Iraqi claim was false.<sup>26</sup> President Clinton, in a 3 March

<sup>22</sup> 'Letter Dated 9 April 1998 From the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council', S/1998/312 (9 April 1998), pp. 3-4.

<sup>23</sup> S/1999/94, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> 'Note by the Secretary-General', S/1998/920 (6 October 1998), p. 5.

<sup>25</sup> S/1998/920, p. 18

<sup>26</sup> Butler, p. 9 and 'Report of the VX Expert Meeting', 23 October 1998, p. 3, and S/1999/94, p. 7.



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1999 letter to Congress, remarked on the events of the summer and autumn of 1998:

The build-up to the current crisis began on August 5 when the Iraqi government suspended co-operation with UNSCOM and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), except on a limited-range of monitoring activities. On October 31, Iraq announced that it was ceasing all co-operation with UNSCOM.<sup>27</sup>

The Iraqi government's behaviour created for international political support Clinton Administration. The UNSC passed SCR 1205 on 5 November 1998, stating that it: '... Reaffirms its intention to act in accordance with the relevant provisions of resolution 687 (1991) on the duration of the prohibitions referred to in that resolution, and notes that by its failure so far to comply with its relevant obligations Iraq has delayed the moment when the Council can do so . . .'.<sup>28</sup> The UNSC then threatened that sanctions would not be reviewed until Iraq co-operated. This rebuke was a manifestation of the residual opposition within the Council to the use of force. The coalition was going to attack in mid-November, but it was called off the attack at the last minute. Having seen Iraqi casualty estimates, President Clinton became concerned and delayed the attack to wait for the Iraqi government to pledge co-operation, which it did late on 15 November 1998.<sup>29</sup>

The Iraqi pledge of co-operation hardly seemed credible, and it was necessary to verify this pledge. Sandy Berger, the American National Security Advisor, recalled that: 'On the 17<sup>th</sup> of November, UNSCOM began to test Iraq's co-operation. The timetable for that effort was established by

<sup>27</sup> 'Iraq's Compliance With the UN Security Council', U.S. House of Representatives Document 106-34, 3 March 1999, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Security Council Resolution 1025 (1998), S/RES/1205 (1998), 5 November 1998, p. 2. Underlines occur in the original.

<sup>29</sup> B. Graham, 'Clinton Overruled Most Advice on Raids', III, 17 November 1998.



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UNSCOM's Chairman, Richard Butler.<sup>30</sup> The tests were: '... focussed on four main areas, pursuant to the Commission's mandate: requests for information through access to documents and interviews of Iraqi personnel; monitoring inspections; inspections of capable sites; and, disarmament inspections relating to proscribed weapons and activities ...'<sup>31</sup> This was the first step towards coercion. The declaration of the test period came with the implicit threat of punishment for Iraq if it failed to cooperate with UNSCOM. Dr. Edgar Buckley, Assistant Under Secretary (Home and Overseas), of the British Ministry of Defence (MoD) explained that:

When the requirement came to prepare a specific possible attack on Iraq in response to Saddam Hussein's withdrawal of co-operation with UNSCOM in October, a plan was drawn up to include a specific selection of these targets designed to achieve the desired military effect. This plan was on the point of being put into operation on 14 November when Saddam Hussein capitulated and promised unconditional full co-operation with UNSCOM in future ... Following that crisis a new plan was drawn up, codenamed Operation DESERT FOX, against the possibility that, as in the past, Saddam's word would prove worthless.<sup>32</sup>

If Iraq failed to sufficiently comply with the coalition's and the UN's demands, force would surely follow.

Richard Butler submitted his report to the UN Secretariat on 15 December. Since the results of this report determined Iraq's fate it was very controversial. The Director-General of the IAEA, Mohamed El Baradei, claimed that: 'The Iraqi counterpart has provided the necessary level of co-operation to enable the above-enumerated activities to be completed

<sup>30</sup> 'Press Briefing by National Security Advisor Sandy Berger', WLIPB, 16 December 1998, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> 'Letter dated 15 December 1998 from the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission established by the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 9 (b) (i) of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) addressed to the Secretary-General', Annex I to 'Letter dated 15 December 1998 From the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council', S/1998/1172 (15 December 1998), p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Buckley cited in Cordesman, The Role of British Forces in DESERT FOX, (Washington, DC: CSIS, 1999), p. 2.



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efficiently and effectively.’<sup>33</sup> For the most part, monitoring met with Iraqi co-operation. However, in one incident, the Iraqis would not allow photographs to be taken due to ‘national security concerns’. On 11 December 1998, another monitoring team was forbidden to conduct an inspection due to the fact that it was the Islamic sabbath.<sup>34</sup> Later that month, UNSCOM was denied access to: ‘. . . a facility occupied by the People’s Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI). The site of this facility was declared as being not under the authority of Iraq . . . A dialogue has begun on this matter and the PMOI has accepted, in principle, that its sites are subject to access by the Commission . . .’<sup>35</sup> In six other inspections, the Iraqi government declared the sites ‘sensitive’, and therefore, UNSCOM had to adhere to the procedures for such sites. The report contained the observation that: ‘In light of the clear evidence that Iraq had taken advance actions at certain of the locations planned for inspection in order to defeat the purposes of inspection, the Executive Chairman decided not to conduct the full range of inspections the team had planned. No inspections of presidential sites took place.’<sup>36</sup> Richard Butler concluded the report by stating:

. . . in the light of this experience, that is, the absence of full co-operation by Iraq, it must regrettably be recorded against Iraq that the commission is not able to conduct the substantive disarmament work mandated to it by the Security Council and, thus, to give the Council the assurances it requires with respect to Iraq’s prohibited weapons programmes . . .<sup>37</sup>

The coalition now had a clear justification for the use of force against Iraq.

<sup>33</sup> Letter dated 14 December 1998 from the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency addressed to the Secretary-General, Annex I to S/1998/1172, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> Letter dated 15 December 1998, Annex I to S/1998/1172, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> Letter dated 15 December 1998, Annex I to S/1998/1172, p. 7. The PMOI is an Iraqi-backed Iranian resistance movement also known as the *Mojahedin e-Khalq*.

<sup>36</sup> Letter dated 15 December 1998, Annex I to S/1998/1172, p. 8.

<sup>37</sup> Letter dated 15 December 1998, Annex I to S/1998/1172, p. 8.



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What was the Iraqi government trying to achieve by resisting UNSCOM? William Cohen believed that Saddam Hussein sought to get rid of UNSCOM and therefore lift the sanctions on Iraq.<sup>38</sup> Iraq's complaints had met with a more sympathetic reaction from the international community in 1997-1998, and it would seem logical to the Iraqi government that passively resisting UNSCOM was a fruitful course of action. The Iraqi government was pursuing a strategy of provocation designed to make the coalition appear aggressive. To cause the coalition to take action or threaten action would likely cause the international community to seek another compromise or, worse yet, generate further sympathy for Iraq's plight.

The Clinton Administration and the British government found the situation unacceptable. Joe Lockhart, the White House Spokesman, noted that: '... the report from Chairman Butler and UNSCOM raises a serious concern about Iraq's willingness and ability to comply with the commitments they made in mid-November ...'.<sup>39</sup> The American government claimed that Iraq's lack of co-operation with UNSCOM was a breach of SCR 687, and SCR 678 authorised force for actions subsequent to the Gulf War.<sup>40</sup> The vague wording of the latter created a legal 'loophole' that had never been countered.<sup>41</sup> This perceived breach provided the catalyst for the subsequent use of force.

The coalition, on the other hand, sought to obtain Iraqi compliance with all UNSC resolutions, especially those pertaining to UNSCOM. In mid-December 1998, as it appeared that Iraq was not co-operating with UNSCOM, the coalition began to prepare for the use of force. For example, as a warning for Iraq, the US deployed seven B-52 bombers to Diego Garcia

<sup>38</sup> 'Operation DESERT FOX', DoD News Briefing, 17 December 1998, pp. 4-5.

<sup>39</sup> 'Press Briefing by Joe Lockhart', WHPB, 16 December 1998.

<sup>40</sup> DoS DPB, 16 December 1998, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> See p. 136 above.



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on 11 December.<sup>42</sup> UNSCOM needed the coalition's support to fulfil its mandate, yet it could not act without the UNSC's backing. The coalition's aim of supporting the disarmament of Iraq became distasteful to a number of governments because that aim was perceived as a means of unnecessarily prolonging the sanctions on Iraq and the suffering of the Iraqi people.

### Constraints

Coercion was more important than outright physical destruction due to the need to improve the coalition's political image. This was weakened by the shifts in the American policy of containment, the scandal over the President's alleged perjury about an extra-marital affair, the UNSC's hesitance to allow the use of force, and the proximity to *Ramadan* and Christmas.

There were serious problems with the Clinton Administration's policy on Iraq. In late 1998, it remained a policy of containment based on four elements:

- The maintenance of sanctions;
- UNSCOM;
- The credible threat of force; and
- Support from allies.<sup>43</sup>

However, the Administration was coming under increasing pressure from Congress to do more about the Iraq problem in 1998. The Iraq Liberation Act (ILA) was one means. This committed the Clinton Administration to support attempts to oust Saddam Hussein. Martin Indyk remarked that: "The policy, as expressed by the President and the Secretary of State and others, is containment and, over time, an effort to produce -- to help the

<sup>42</sup> M. Evans, 'B-52s send warning to Iraq', *Times*, 11 December 1998.

<sup>43</sup> 'Press Briefing by National Security Advisor Sandy Berger', p. 3.



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Iraqi people produce a government that is more representative of their aspirations and more willing to meet Iraq's obligations to the international community.<sup>44</sup> Naturally, the Administration was hesitant to implement the ILA. A number of important Senators, such as the Majority Leader, Trent Lott, the Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms, and the Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Richard Shelby, wrote the President, urging him to implement the ILA more vigorously.<sup>45</sup> The implementation of the ILA was accelerated in response to Congressional pressure.<sup>46</sup>

The President had an affair with a White House intern named Monica Lewinsky in 1996, and when questioned about it, lied. In mid-December, the scandal over the affair and President Clinton's testimony led to a debate in Congress over impeachment. On 16 December 1998, the House of Representatives was considering impeachment while the coalition launched DESERT FOX.<sup>47</sup> This was a rare event, as it is traditional for Congress to separate domestic political concerns and the execution of foreign policy in times of emergency, but the threat of impeachment strained the relationship between the President and the largely Republican Congress.<sup>48</sup>

At the UNSC, Richard Butler's report met with a number of different reactions. The Secretary-General advocated a more diplomatic approach, recommending three other options: 1) further review of the trial period; 2) further time for Iraq to cooperate; and 3) review of Iraqi co-operation since

<sup>44</sup> 'Transcript: Indyk December 18 Teleconference on US policy on Iraq', USIA Washington File, 21 December 1998, p. 6.

<sup>45</sup> Letter from Senators Lott, Helms, Shelby, Kyl, Lugar and Brownback to President Clinton, 16 December 1998, pp. 1-2.

<sup>46</sup> 'Press Briefing by National Security Advisor Sandy Berger', p. 7.

<sup>47</sup> P. Wolfson, 'Congress-Iraq', Voice of America, 16 December 1998.

<sup>48</sup> P. Wolfson, 'Congress/Impeachment', Voice of America, 16 December 1998.



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1991.<sup>49</sup> Many of the other members, feeling that Butler's report was inaccurate or misleading, agreed with Kofi Annan's recommendations.

The French government, for example, sought to develop a new system of arms control for Iraq. The French government believed that the American government sought to maintain the sanctions in order to remove Saddam Hussein as opposed to the disarmament of Iraq.<sup>50</sup> This belief, along with economic self-interest, contributed heavily to the French opposition to the use of force. It offered a compromise in a less intrusive version of UNSCOM as a result.

Being the likely targets of Iraqi WMDs, the Gulf States were more supportive of the coalition position in November 1998. At that time, the GCC states were prepared to allow the coalition to conduct offensive operations from their territories.<sup>51</sup> In early December, the GCC issued a statement placing responsibility for any consequence that would follow UNSCOM's tests on Saddam Hussein.<sup>52</sup> By mid-December, however, only Kuwait and Oman were prepared to host forces conducting offensive operations against Iraq.<sup>53</sup> Drawing from the DESERT STRIKE experience, the Clinton Administration reduced its force presence in Saudi Arabia as it could substitute unmanned power without political complications if force was to be employed.<sup>54</sup>

The Arab hesitancy to allow operations to be staged from their territories was tied to the fact that *Ramadan*, an Islamic festival, was to start with the coming of the new crescent moon on 18 December 1998. This

<sup>49</sup> S/1998/1172, p. 1. Butler noted that these recommendations were similar to proposals made by the Russian government earlier that year in pp. 176-177.

<sup>50</sup> Butler, pp. 200-201.

<sup>51</sup> S. Myers, 'Arab Show Little Support For Strikes Against Iraq', *IIIT*, 7 November 1998.

<sup>52</sup> 'Press Briefing by National Security Advisor Sandy Berger', p. 6.

<sup>53</sup> D. Jehl, 'Saudis Limit U.S. Aircraft Hitting Iraq', *IIIT*, 19 December 1998.

<sup>54</sup> White, p. 54.



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presented the coalition leadership with a dilemma. To attack during *Ramadan* would be an insult to the Islamic world and would have potentially alienated the very states that hosted coalition forces. On the other hand, delaying any operation until after the festival could have led to a situation where other interested states, such as the PRC or Russia, could have generated enough opposition to prevent the conduct of any operation.<sup>55</sup>

The Clinton Administration believed that speed was of the essence. Sandy Berger recalled that: 'We've learned from previous episodes that the longer the time between CNN reporting that we're thinking about acting and actually acting, the more time Saddam Hussein has to disperse his forces, the more time he has to move things that we would like not to be moved.'<sup>56</sup> Given that the Iraqi government could move WMD-related materiel from site to site and that some material, such as precursor chemicals and dual-use materiel, were difficult to track, it was imperative to act quickly before the situation changed.<sup>57</sup> The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Henry Shelton, U.S. Army, stated that: '... one of the reasons that we revised our plan back on 15 November so that we could strike within 24 hours was to try to hold down on the amount of movement time allowed, so that in those suspected areas, we could achieve maximum effectiveness ...'<sup>58</sup> Surprise was therefore vital. This, however, did not come without costs. The timing of Butler's report obviated any degree of surprise. There had been no real political preparation for the use of force, as this report was considered sufficient evidence of the breach. As a result of the requirement for surprise, there were no serious efforts to win over the international media or community.<sup>59</sup> Surprise was necessary to ensure that casualties were kept to a minimum. President Clinton recalled that: 'Secretary Cohen and General

<sup>55</sup> Cordesman, *Lessons*, p. 14.

<sup>56</sup> 'Press Briefing by National Security Advisor Sandy Berger', p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> 'Broad Range of Targets May Be Only Option', *ABC News*, 17 December 1998.

<sup>58</sup> 'Operation DESERT FOX', *DoD News Briefing*, 18 December 1998, p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> Cordesman, *Lessons*, p. 14.



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Shelton strongly urged that we act at the point where we could have maximum impact with minimum risk to our own people because of the surprise factor.<sup>60</sup> The President was also concerned about the possibility of Iraqi casualties, and ordered that efforts be taken to minimise the possibilities of Iraqi casualties and collateral damage.<sup>61</sup>

### Means and Target Sets

The coalition's options were somewhat constrained because only Kuwait and Oman were willing to allow offensive operations to be staged from their soil. Of course, 'over-the-horizon' and carrier-based power were also available, but this excluded all JTF-SWA assets based in Saudi Arabia. In addition to this, the coalition was restricted to its narrow route of entry and egress into Iraqi airspace.

The fact that the crisis was based on Iraqi behaviour with regard to UNSCOM meant that more significant target sets became suitable. Both WMD assets and the intelligence and security apparatus that aided in their concealment were obvious choices. Given that the entry/egress route was narrow, Iraq's air defences that protected the approaches to Baghdad needed to be suppressed. This would lead to a situation where unmanned power would be used to suppress Iraqi air defences so that coalition aircraft could attack WMD targets in the Baghdad area.

<sup>60</sup> 'Remarks by the President in Photo Opportunity with Foreign Policy Team', WHPR, 17 December 1998, p. 2.

<sup>61</sup> 'Transcript: Albright Interview on Larry King Live December 16', USIA Washington File, 16 December 1998, p. 2.



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**Table 15: Forces in Theatre as of 15 December 1998<sup>62</sup>**

	USAF	USN/USMC	RAF/RN
Saudi Arabia	18 F-15 18 F-16 6 AWACS 2 JSTARS 4 RC-135 12 KC-135 20 C-130 2 U-2 (UN flagged) 6 UH-60	2 EA-6B	6 Tornado GR-1
UAE	12 KC-10		
Warships Afloat/Gulf		USS Enterprise USS Gettysburg USS Stout USS Nicholson USS Hayler USS Carr USS Miami USS Detroit USS Ardent USS Dextrous  ARG: USS Belleau Wood USS Dubuque USS Germantown	HMS Boxer RFA Brambleleaf
Forces on ship		USS Enterprise: 14 F-14B 36 F-18C 4 EA-6B 8 S-3B 5 E-2C 6 SH-60  USS Belleau Wood: 31 MEU 5 AV-8B 4 AH-1W 12 CH-46E 4 CH-53 4 CH-1N	

<sup>62</sup> Data from 'http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/ops/desert\_fox\_orbat\_981223.htm'.



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	USAF	USN/USMC	RAF/RN
Diego Garcia	15 B-52		
Kuwait	13 A-10 22 F-16 3 EC-130 3 HC-130 2 C-130E 3 HH-60 2 HH-63		12 Tornado GR 1
Oman	10 KC-10		
Bahrain	6 B-1		2 VC-10

### Analysis

Operation DESERT FOX was launched on the night of 16 December (Baghdad time). Joe Lockhart announced that:

At the direction of the President, United States military forces have launched a substantial military strike against Iraq. The President decided to take this action this morning, after reviewing the conclusions of the report to the United Nations Secretary-General and Security Council yesterday by UNSCOM Chairman Richard Butler, and discussing the situation with his foreign policy team here at the White House.<sup>63</sup>

The objectives and conduct of the operation demonstrated that Iraqi co-operation with UNSCOM was both the American and the coalition goal.

The first night of DESERT FOX, December 1998, saw the coalition concentrate its efforts first against the Iraqi IADS. The British Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), General Sir Charles Guthrie, British Army, remarked in a 17 December 1998 press conference that: 'The decision to use sea-launched systems at the outset of the campaign was made both to maximise tactical surprise and operational security. The United States did not use land-based

<sup>63</sup> 'Statement by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart', WHIPB, 16 December 1998.



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aircraft either.’<sup>64</sup> It was impossible to obtain strategic or even operational surprise, as the Iraqi government was well aware that Butler’s report would lead to the use of force by the coalition. In preparation for the imminent loss of control, Saddam Hussein assigned responsibility for each of four sectors of Iraq to four trusted aides.<sup>65</sup> General Shelton remarked in a press conference the following day that: ‘Last night’s actions principally involved our naval forces in the Gulf with more than 70 Navy and Marine Corps strike support aircraft from the USS ENTERPRISE; and well over 200 Tomahawk cruise missiles launched from Navy ships.’<sup>66</sup> The attacks against air defences were intended: ‘. . . to create access for the aircraft flying north, and in fact to create access even for the cruise missiles so that we increase the probability of those reaching their targets as well . . .’<sup>67</sup> These targets were also referred to as ‘supporting targets’, where they were necessary in order to enable further strikes.<sup>68</sup> Over 50 targets were struck that night, and the majority were air defence assets. Some WMD, WMD security and WMD production targets were also attacked.<sup>69</sup> These targets did not include ‘dual-use’ facilities due to the possibility of collateral damage and political sensitivity.<sup>70</sup> This had the effect of leaving some WMD-related industries intact, and reinforced the belief that the coalition would be unable to carry out its threat of destroying Iraq’s chemical and biological weapons.<sup>71</sup>

On the first day, the President also authorised the deployment of the ‘Crisis Response Force’ (CRF). The CRF consisted of an second carrier battle

<sup>64</sup> ‘Edited Transcript of Press Conference Given By the Secretary of State for Defence, George Robertson, and the Chief of Defence Staff, General Sir Charles Guthrie, London, Thursday 17 December 1998’, FCO News Release, 17 December 1998, p. 2.

<sup>65</sup> Ritter, p. 128, and ‘Saddam Consolidates Rule’, IIIT, 17 December 1998

<sup>66</sup> ‘Operation DESERT FOX’, DoD News Briefing, 17 December 1998, p. 2.

<sup>67</sup> Rear Admiral Thomas Wilson, USN, Director of Intelligence of the Joint Staff, ‘Operation DESERT FOX’, DoD News Briefing, 18 December 1998, p. 8.

<sup>68</sup> Wilson, ‘Operation DESERT FOX’, DoD News Briefing, 18 December 1998, p. 14.

<sup>69</sup> ‘Operation DESERT FOX’, 17 December 1998, p. 2.

<sup>70</sup> Cordesman, Lessons, p. 25.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.



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group, extra aircraft and an army task force. The Secretary of Defense ordered its deployment after President Clinton's 16 December 'Address to the Nation'.<sup>72</sup> The USS Carl Vinson and its battle group arrived in the Red Sea on 17 December 1998. The remainder of the CRF arrived on 20-21 December 1998.<sup>73</sup>

The second day of the operation expanded the target list. These targets included 'economic' targets, such as the Basra oil refinery, since it was a conduit for the illegal shipments of oil.<sup>74</sup> Other targets included certain airfields, and 'command and control' targets, like the headquarters of Iraqi military intelligence and the RGFC as well as its divisional and corps headquarters.<sup>75</sup> With the target list expansion, the coalition began to use manned air assets from Carrier Air Wing 3 on board the USS Enterprise as well as aircraft based in Kuwait and Oman. In terms of air defence on both days, coalition spokesmen revealed that the Iraqis had employed only some limited AAA.<sup>76</sup> The 16 December missile strikes had been successful in enabling the expansion of target sets for the application of manned air power.

Operations continued on 18 December 1998 due to the fact that the coalition had not completed the BDA. CINC CENTCOM later commented that: 'At the end of the third day and going into the fourth day, I was asked if I felt our objectives were achieved or could be achieved. I felt I needed the fourth night. Part way through that I was asked again, and informed the Chairman that I was satisfied that we had achieved the objectives as I saw them.'<sup>77</sup> The CINC was referring to the target sets involving the RGFC. At

<sup>72</sup> L. Kozaryn, 'Saddam Abused His Last Chance, Clinton Says', Armed Forces Information Service, 17 December 1998.

<sup>73</sup> 'Operation DESERT FOX', 17 December 1998, p. 3.

<sup>74</sup> 'Operation DESERT FOX', DoD News Briefing, 18 December 1998, p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> 'Transcript: Cohen/Shelton/Wilson Briefing on Iraq Dec. 19', USIA Washington File, 19 December 1992, p. 2.

<sup>76</sup> 'Operation DESERT FOX', DoD News Briefing, 18 December 1998, p. 4.

<sup>77</sup> DoD News Briefing, 21 December 1998, p. 12.



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the DoD briefing on 19 December 1998, General Shelton remarked that: ‘... the majority [of strikes] today were directed against Republican Guard units, which were restrikes of the same units, different types of units within the same ...’<sup>78</sup> These would be the last strikes of the operation.

DESERT FOX ended after the strikes on 19 December 1998. The President remarked at a press conference that: ‘It will take some time to make a detailed assessment of our operation, but based on the briefing I’ve just received, I am confident we have achieved our mission.’<sup>79</sup> His optimistic assessment was not necessarily borne out by all of the evidence offered by his spokesmen.

The initial BDA suggested that the operation was successful in terms of physical destruction. To be fair, it is difficult to gauge victory or defeat from estimates of the destruction of targets or target sets. Early reports claimed that the strikes were going well since the targets were being significantly damaged.<sup>80</sup> The Pentagon briefers admitted that the BDA priority during the first two days was to assess the damage done to the IADS.<sup>81</sup> On the second day, they concluded that: ‘... the southern Iraq air defence system has been degraded and has largely proven to be ineffective against the strikes which have been conducted to date ...’<sup>82</sup> The strikes were, at the very least, having an impact on the Iraqi government’s security apparatus for production of WMDs. The focus of effort was against missile production facilities as opposed to biological or chemical facilities, as WMD delivery systems posed a greater threat than the WMDs themselves. On 19 December, more details of the coalition’s BDA were revealed.

<sup>78</sup> DoD News Briefing, 19 December 1998, p. 5.

<sup>79</sup> ‘Transcript: Clinton Remarks on Iraq December 19, 1998’, USIA Washington File, 19 December 1998, p. 2.

<sup>80</sup> Senior Master Sergeant J. Katzaman, USAF, ‘Initial damage assessments show “good coverage”’, Air Force News, 17 December 1998. See also: Cordesman, Lessons, pp. 46-47.

<sup>81</sup> Wilson, ‘Operation DESERT FOX’, DoD News Briefing, 18 December 1998, p. 15.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.



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**Table 16: BDA - 18 December 1998<sup>83</sup>**

	NIL	Lt	Mod	Sev	Destr	Unk	
IADS	8	1	1	2	1	14	Southern sector 'degraded'
C <sup>2</sup>	2	0	2	5	5	4	Security HQ severely damaged
WMD Security	1	4	9	1	2	2	
WMD Production	0	2	1	0	0	8	Missile research and repair facilities damaged
RGFC	0	1	2	1	0	4	Divisional and Corps HQ moderately to severely damaged
Airfields	1	0	3	1	0	0	
Economic	0	0	0	0	0	1	

'Lt', Light: 1-14%; 'Mod', Moderate, 15-45%; 'Sev', Severe, 45-75%; 'Destr', Destroyed 76-100%; and 'Unk', Unknown.

There were serious concerns about the BDA after the operation. On 21 December 1998, it was reported that of 99 targets struck, 28 had been destroyed or severely damaged, 46 had light or moderate damage, and 23 were still being assessed.<sup>84</sup> At the end of the operation, in response to a question about BDA, the CINC replied: 'If I had to put a score sheet up, which I am reluctant to do -- but I will because I know in some ways that's the way we get focused on BDA -- we successfully hit 85 percent of our targets, as we know it now. And fully successful in terms that I'm completely satisfied that we had the results gained was 74 percent.'<sup>85</sup> The data, to say the least, was suspect.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Data from 'BDA Assessment Slides', 18 December 1998.

<sup>84</sup> B. Graham, 'Pentagon Evaluates Impact of Bombing Raids', *IIIT*, 21 December 1998.

<sup>85</sup> *DoD News Briefing*, 21 December 1998, p. 3.



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This cast doubts on the American claim of victory. From this 74% assessment came the Secretary of Defense's observation that: 'We estimate that Saddam's missile program has been set back by at least a year.'<sup>87</sup> By January 1999, this estimate was changed to two years.<sup>88</sup> The coalition was well aware that UNSCOM was effectively finished. If Iraq could not be contained with inspections, it would have to have its means of WMD delivery destroyed to retard the development of a WMD capability in the absence of UNSCOM. Containment therefore had an expiry date.

**Table 17: BDA - 19 December 1998:<sup>89</sup>**

	NIL	Lt	Mod	Sev	Dest.	Unk	Remarks
IADS	0	4	4	5	1	18	Southern sector 'degraded'
C <sup>2</sup>	0	2	4	4	7	3	Security headquarters severely damaged
WMD Security	0	5	6	5	2	0	
WMD Production	0	4	5	1	0	1	
RGFC	0	1	5	3	0	0	Divisional and Corps headquarters moderately to severely damaged
Airfields	0	1	4	0	0	1	
Economic	0	1	0	0	0	0	

<sup>86</sup> Cordesman, Lessons, p. 90.

<sup>87</sup> Cohen cited in 'Defence Department Report, Saturday, December 19', USIA Washington File, 19 December 1998.

<sup>88</sup> Shelton cited in L. Kozaryn, 'Zinni Says Saddam's "Shaken, Desperate"', Armed Forces Information Service, 12 January 1999.

<sup>89</sup> Data from 'BDA Assessment Slides', 19 December 1998.



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The coalition members believed prematurely that their aim had been achieved after the strikes. President Clinton reported to Congress that:

Since December 23, following the conclusion of Desert Fox, we have seen a significant increase in the frequency, intensity, and co-ordination of the Iraqi air defence system to counter enforcement of the no-fly zones. Since that date, U.S. and coalition aircraft enforcing the no-fly zones have been subject to multiple anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) firings, radar illuminations, and over 20 surface-to-air missile attacks.<sup>90</sup>

The Iraqi government more or less went to war by increasing resistance within the NFZs. Due to the perceived success of DESERT FOX, the CRF began to redeploy on 28 December 1998. The USS Enterprise and its battle group left for the Mediterranean, and the majority of the B-52s were withdrawn in addition to six B-1 bombers, 10 A-10s and 10 KC-10 tanker aircraft. Ground force levels also declined.<sup>91</sup> The coalition reversed its deployment just as Iraq began to actively resist.

On the domestic front, the strikes did little to ward off President Clinton's opponents. Despite the tradition of forgetting partisan issues in times of crisis, Congress continued to ponder what should be done about the President's alleged perjury. Late on 16 December 1998, the House of Representatives opted to postpone the vote on impeachment.<sup>92</sup> However, this did not last long. On the morning of 17 December, they decided to re-open the debate on impeachment.<sup>93</sup> Despite the appearance of protesters in a number of American cities, the American public was supportive of President Clinton's decision to strike Iraq. Poll data showed that the majority (from 60% to 80%, depending on the data) supported the actions against Iraq.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>90</sup> House Document 106-34, p. 4.

<sup>91</sup> L. Kozaryn, 'Gulf Force Draws Down', Armed Forces Information Service, 28 December 1998.

<sup>92</sup> D. Swan, 'Congress/Iraq/Impeachment', Voice of America, 16 December 1998.

<sup>93</sup> 'Congressional Report, Thursday, December 17', USIA Washington File, 17 December 1998.

<sup>94</sup> M. Leland, 'Bombing Opposition', Voice of America, 17 December 1998.



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The consequences of the strikes did not help the situation. On 15 December 1998, the American Ambassador to the United Nations, Peter Burleigh, warned Richard Butler that strikes on Iraq would be likely in the wake of Butler's report. As a result, UNSCOM and IAEA personnel were evacuated to Bahrain, and other UN personnel, such as those responsible for humanitarian relief began to evacuate on 16 December 1998.<sup>95</sup> The Executive Chairman reported to the UN Secretariat that: '... the prime considerations in his decision were to ensure the safety and security of the Commission's personnel and the need to act immediately ...'<sup>96</sup> This was not received well by the international community. The coalition's use of force appeared to be the cause of, and not the catalyst for, UNSCOM's cessation of operations.

There were mixed reactions within the Arab world. Most of the governments stated that it was Saddam's fault that strikes had occurred.<sup>97</sup> Pan-Arab sentiment gave rise to a popular expression of sympathy for the Iraqi people.<sup>98</sup> Some of the other political bodies, such as the Arab League, echoed this sentiment by condemning the operation.<sup>99</sup> Part of the problem could be attributed to the nature of briefings where the key audience appeared to be the American people, seeming to ignore the Arab world.<sup>100</sup>

Naturally Iraqi spokesmen objected strongly to DESERT FOX. Nizar Hamdoon complained that the bombing started before the UNSC could decide on the matter of Richard Butler's report. He also complained

<sup>95</sup> 'Daily Press Briefing of Office of Spokesman For Secretary-General', 16 December 1998, p. 2. See also: 'Secretary-General's Advisory on United Nations Personnel in Iraq', Press Release SG/SM/6842 IK/266, 16 December 1998, and 'Temporary Relocation of IAEA Personnel from Iraq to Bahrain', Press Release IAEA/1330 IK/263, 16 December 1998.

<sup>96</sup> 'Note By The Secretary-General', S/1999/401 (9 April 1999), p. 7

<sup>97</sup> 'Transcript: Secretary of State's Briefing on Iraq Dec. 17', USIA Washington File, 17 December 1998, p. 3.

<sup>98</sup> For examples, see R. Engel, 'Arabs/Iraq', Voice of America, 18 December 1998, "As-Sharq", cited in A. Guthrie, 'A Skeptical World Reacts To U-S Iraq Attack', Voice of America, 17 December 1998, 'World Opinion Roundup: Air Strikes Against Iraq', USIA Washington File, 17 December 1998.

<sup>99</sup> R. Engel, 'Arabs/Iraq', Voice of America, 17 December 1998.

<sup>100</sup> Cordesman, Lessons, p. 39. On p. 44, Cordesman noted that the Arab world was fascinated by the Lewinsky affair, and that American actions at the time were all seen in that light.



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about Ambassador Burleigh's warning to UNSCOM about its withdrawal from Iraq.<sup>101</sup> In addition to this, Ambassador Hamdoon outlined that it was the Iraqi government's belief that the US, by conducting DESERT FOX, sought to weaken the regime in order to cause an ouster of Saddam Hussein.<sup>102</sup> In one press conference, Madeleine Albright stated there were three goals to DESERT FOX. These were:

- 'Short-Term': degradation of Iraq's WMDs and C<sup>2</sup> infrastructure;
- 'Medium-Term': compliance with all UN SCRs; and
- 'Longer-Term': a government in Iraq that was more representative of the Iraqi people.<sup>103</sup>

The 19 December Presidential radio address reinforced the policy statements made by the Secretary of State. President Clinton stated that the US would use force to ensure that Saddam Hussein would not pose a threat, that the US would seek to maintain sanctions until the Iraqi government complied with UN resolutions and that it would: ' . . . strengthen our engagement with Iraqis who want a new government, one that will respect its citizens and live in peace with its neighbours . . .'<sup>104</sup> Laws like the ILA would only serve to confirm this belief in the minds of a number of governments, thus helping engender international sympathy for Iraq's cause.

Key UNSC members criticised the operation. The French government, echoing Arab sentiment, stated that it was concerned about the fate of the Iraqi people. In addition, it noted that Iraq failed to comply, thus

<sup>101</sup> 'Statement by Ambassador Nizar Hamdoon to members of the Security Council of the United Nations during its meeting of December 16, 1998, regarding the ongoing aggression of the U.S. and U.K. against Iraq', pp. 1-2.

<sup>102</sup> 'Ambassador Hamdoon's appearance on Larry King Live on December 17, 1998', USIA Washington File, 17 December 1998, pp. 1 and 5

<sup>103</sup> 'Transcript: Secretary of State's Briefing on Iraq Dec. 17', pp. 5-6.

<sup>104</sup> 'Radio Address of the President to the Nation', 19 December 1998 (10:06 EST), cited in A. Cordesman, Desert Fox: Key Official US and British Statements and Press Conferences, (Washington, DC: CSIS, 1999), p. 111.



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prompting American action.<sup>105</sup> While this statement hardly appears to be critical of DESERT FOX, the French government later made its distaste known. On 30 December 1998, it decided to withdraw its forces from SOUTHERN WATCH.<sup>106</sup> The Russian and Chinese governments were outraged by DESERT FOX. During the UNSC debate on the Butler report, Sergei Lavrov, Russia's Permanent Representative to the UN, questioned the right (or lack thereof) of the coalition to use force without prior authorisation of the UNSC.<sup>107</sup> The Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, speaking at a conference in Madrid, claimed that Butler was: ' . . . "grossly exceeding" his authority in Iraq . . . ' <sup>108</sup> More serious actions were taken. The *Duma*, Russia's parliament, postponed the ratification of the START II treaty.<sup>109</sup> Madeleine Albright replied by warning that: ' . . . if START II is not ratified, that they [the Russians] will have to use scarce defence funds for the problem of maintaining missiles that they don't need, rather than on some of their other force needs . . . ' <sup>110</sup> President Yeltsin recalled the Russian Ambassador to the United States.<sup>111</sup> The Russian government believed that its concerns were being ignored.<sup>112</sup> At the UNSC, the Russian government later sought to condemn the coalition for its actions, as well as agitated for the Executive Chairman's resignation.<sup>113</sup> The Chinese government was like-minded. Chinese government spokesmen claimed that the report was groundless, and that the use of force could only worsen the situation.<sup>114</sup> Sun Yuxi, the

<sup>105</sup> 'Audition du Ministre Des Affaires Étrangères, M. Hubert Védrine, Devant la Commission des Affaires Étrangères de l'Assemblée Nationale', *French EMPR*, 22 December 1998, p. 1, and J. Nundy, 'France/Iraq', *Voice of America*, 17 December 1998.

<sup>106</sup> 'Patrols Ended, France Confirms', *IIIT*, 30 December 1998.

<sup>107</sup> 'Press Release SC/6611', 16 December 1998, p. 2.

<sup>108</sup> P. Heinlein, 'Russia/Iraq', *Voice of America*, 16 December 1998.

<sup>109</sup> START II is the acronym for the 'Strategic Arms Reduction Talks', an American-Russian forum over the reduction of their nuclear arsenals.

<sup>110</sup> 'Transcript: Secretary of State's Briefing, 17 December 1998', p. 7.

<sup>111</sup> B. Rodgers, 'Russia/U-S-Iraq-Update', *Voice of America*, 17 December 1998.

<sup>112</sup> M. Gordon, 'Moscow Orders U.S. Envoy Home to Protest Air Strikes', *NYT*, 18 December 1998.

<sup>113</sup> M. Ruston, 'U-N/Iraq Friday', *Voice of America*, 18 December 1998.

<sup>114</sup> 'Press Release SC/6611', 16 December 1998, pp. 2 and 5.



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Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, called for a halt to the strikes, as they lacked authorisation and were a violation of the UN Charter.<sup>115</sup>

The Iraqi government did not comply with UN resolutions after DESERT FOX. There were two reasons for the lack of effect. First, the coalition declared victory before the Iraqi government admitted defeat. This was either a public relations gambit, or the coalition's purpose was really to support containment by eliminating or at least retarding Iraq's missile capability, prior to UNSCOM's possible replacement by a weaker inspections regime. Second, it appeared that Iraq's defeat became necessary. Iraq began to treat the coalition as an enemy and fought back, as if it were at war. Ambassador A. Elizabeth Jones, the Principal Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, testified before the Senate Committee for Foreign Relations, that:

Ever since the December air strikes, the government offices in Baghdad have been dispersed; the government is unable to function with the efficiency that it has in the past. More importantly, the Republican Guard has been dispersed and is unable to take advantage of the relative comforts of Baghdad . . . Saddam Hussein failed in his primary strategy through the fall, which was to get sanctions lifted and to gain control of the money from the sale of oil and from the lifting of sanctions.<sup>116</sup>

Yet Saddam Hussein did not do what the coalition wanted him to do and offer to cooperate with UNSCOM. Why was this the case? The CRF was withdrawn from the region as Iraqi forces resisted in both the NNFZ and the SNFZ, and the ILA provided empirical proof for the Iraqi government that the coalition sought its overthrow. Not to resist would have meant that the Iraqi government had already surrendered to the coalition's demands.

<sup>115</sup> 'China Condemns U.S. Airstrikes Against Iraq', USIA Washington File, 17 December 1998, and S. Ho, 'China/Iraq', Voice of America, 17 December 1998.

<sup>116</sup> Ambassador Jones' testimony before the Committee appears in 'United States Policy Toward Iraq', Senate Hearing 106-41, 9 March 1999, pp. 5-6.



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In DESERT FOX, the Iraqi government was presented with the choice of co-operating with UNSCOM or being disarmed by force of arms. This message was impossible to misinterpret given the lead-up of the crisis. The timing of the crisis, where it was overshadowed by an American political scandal and *Ramadan*, offered Iraq a powerful opportunity. If the coalition attacked, it was sure to appear to be overly forceful, and this would have definite political benefits for the Iraqi government. Similarly, the chance that President Clinton might be impeached offered additional benefits and gave the impression that this was a retreat from domestic affairs to a war. The Iraqi government had ample reason to believe that any coalition action would be unpopular with the international community and short. UNSCOM's report and the speed at which the coalition acted upon it created significant political friction, and this reduced Iraq's political isolation. The coalition, however, was able to provide Iraq with a clear perception of its capability despite the fact it was limited to entering Iraqi airspace via the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border. The coalition finally attacked the two most significant target sets. However, this was still insufficient to coerce Iraq. The Iraqi government was well aware that even if DESERT FOX significantly damaged the Iraqi arsenal, this was irrelevant as UNSCOM was now gone. It had both offers of mitigation (in that whatever replaced UNSCOM would respect Iraqi sovereignty) and hope because of the international outcry. The 'pain' became more than bearable.

### Conclusion

DESERT FOX was a failure. The Iraqi government did not comply with the coalition's demands for co-operation with UNSCOM. The coalition withdrew before Iraq even offered a hint of concessions. Neither the implied threat (a period of testing Iraqi co-operation) nor the use of force convinced the Iraqi government that compliance was preferable to resistance. Coalition actions seemed to reinforce the value of resistance. The international community no longer seemed to be concerned about the enforcement of SCR 687 and its antecedents. Richard Butler reported in April of 1999 that:



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Under the Commission's monitoring plan, Iraq is required to provide to the Commission semi-annual declarations on activities, facilities, materials and other items that might be used for prohibited purposes. Iraq has not provided the declarations which were due on 15 January 1999. The Commission has not received any other notifications required from Iraq under the monitoring plan.<sup>117</sup>

He also observed that from 6 October 1998 on: '... the Commission has not received, in the period under review [until 11 April 1999], the co-operation required of Iraq to enable it to conduct its work as mandated by the Security Council ...'<sup>118</sup> What did this mean for the coalition? Scott Ritter summarised the situation best by stating that: 'Desert Fox ... provided the final proof that the U.S. was fully committed to an open-ended policy of containment and little else. Precision bombardment with cruise missiles made many walls crumble. UNSCOM crumbled with those walls in Baghdad. Weapons inspections ceased. And a once-mighty coalition of allies has disintegrated.'<sup>119</sup> The coalition could only extend the most crucial element of containment for a short time after UNSCOM ended. The American and British governments were forced to gamble and lost.

<sup>117</sup> S/1999/401, p. 13.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>119</sup> Ritter, p. 29.



## CHAPTER 12: CONCLUSION

This thesis postulated a series of criteria to determine success or failure in coercion. These criteria were:

- Choice
- Communication
- Credibility of Threats and Actions
- Erosion of Willpower
- Isolation
- Adversary's Perception of Capability
- Value of Target Sets
- Sufficient Degree of 'Pain'.<sup>1</sup>

Three main questions were posed when applying these criteria to the cases:

1. Have air and unmanned power been effective tools for the exercise of coercion against Iraq?
2. Has the coercion of Iraq been successful at fulfilling the coalition's goals?
3. What academic and policy lessons can be drawn about coercion for the future?

Each question will be answered in sequence.

### **1. Air and Unmanned Power: Means and Effectiveness**

This question cannot be answered without first determining which cases were coercion, 'enabling' or control and then matching the cases to the means employed in each case.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 61 above.



Table 18: Taxonomy of Cases

Enabling	Coercion	Control
PROVIDE COMFORT	January 1993	DESERT STORM
SOUTHERN WATCH, 1992-August 1996	SOUTHERN WATCH, September 1996-1998	
DESERT STRIKE	VIGILANT WARRIOR	
	DESERT FOX	

The ‘enabling’ and ‘control’ cases will not be discussed further. This leaves four cases from which to draw conclusions about coercion: January 1993, VIGILANT WARRIOR, SOUTHERN WATCH (due to the SNFZ expansion in DESERT STRIKE), and DESERT FOX.

Table 19: Cases & Means

Air Power	Air & Unmanned	Air & Land Power
SOUTHERN WATCH, 1996-1998 (Threat Based Coercion - Failure)	January 1993 (Force Based Coercion - Success)	VIGILANT WARRIOR (Threat Based Coercion - Success)
	DESERT FOX (Force Based Coercion - Failure)	

The coalition tended to use air power in tandem with other means. It was on one occasion employed alone as a threat, but in force-based cases, unmanned power was also used.

This question of means and effectiveness really focuses on the last two criteria of the thesis, these being Value of Target Sets and Sufficient Degree of ‘Pain’. These two criteria beg the questions of whether or not there was a suitable match between the chosen means and the choice of target sets, and whether or not the means were sufficiently threatening and/or destructive.

**Threat-Based Coercion:**

Were the means used to threaten Iraq appropriate for the threat, that is, were they tied to the political justifications (SCRs 678 and 687) as well as the particular crisis? Were the target sets threatened valued by the Iraqi



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government? In the first case, VIGILANT WARRIOR, the coalition threatened in order to 'deny' an Iraqi invasion. Coalition activities and force levels were increased to signal that its readiness to use force. In the second case, SOUTHERN WATCH post-August 1996, the coalition merely increased the pressure by increasing the SNFZ to the 33<sup>rd</sup> Parallel. This represented an implied threat that the coalition could attack targets in Baghdad without notice. While this might personalise the situation for Saddam Hussein, this gambit was not inherently tied to the earlier UN resolutions and had little to do with RGFC actions against the Iraqi Kurds. This became politically contentious, which weakened the credibility of an implied threat. It is not possible to ascertain intended target sets for VIGILANT WARRIOR as this represented an attempt at deterrence.

Were the means employed sufficiently threatening or destructive? This really equates into two simpler questions: Could the coalition actually hit the targets being threatened? Was there a doctrinal match between the means being threatened and the target sets in terms of the optimisation of weapons effects? In the threat-based cases, the coalition could hit the targets being threatened (Iraqi land forces or targets in southern Iraq - their capability to locate and destroy targets was proven well in DESERT STORM).<sup>2</sup> For VIGILANT WARRIOR, both questions point towards an assessment of whether or not the coalition could effectively 'deny' Iraq had there been an invasion. The combination of air assets and ground forces from over the horizon would have prevented a *fait accompli*, and been capable of repelling or reversing an invasion shortly thereafter. In the post-DESERT STRIKE iteration of SOUTHERN WATCH, these questions focus on whether or not the coalition could strike targets in Baghdad with little to no warning. This, of course, was a risky proposition. While this had been done effectively in the DESERT STORM air campaign, it was undertaken primarily by T-LAMs,

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 114- 121 above.



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Stealth aircraft and with a rather focussed SEAD effort.<sup>3</sup> SEAD is vital, but to coerce successfully, it may be necessary deliberately to assume risk to maintain tactical surprise or to convey the appearance of recklessness to the adversary. This meant that this threat's credibility was weakened by the perceptions of casualty aversion and a requirement to bring additional assets from 'Over the Horizon' unless the coalition was prepared to assume additional risk. This suggests that a strategy of gradual escalation is inconsistent with a threat based on surprise.

### **Force-Based Coercion:**

Was the employment of air and unmanned power appropriate for the target sets chosen in the cases of January 1993 and DESERT FOX? In both cases, the target sets (air defences, WMD sites and WMD-related sites) were tied to the political justifications and the crisis. In both 1993 and 1998, the core issue was Iraq's non-compliance with SCR 687's terms of disarmament.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, both cases focussed on more significant target sets than the threat-based cases. In January 1993, the missile strikes were focussed on the Zaafaraniyah nuclear plant, which reinforced the coalition's demand for Iraq's co-operation with the UN by suggesting that Iraq could be disarmed by force instead of peacefully. The strikes against the southern air defences were an attempt to ensure the continued safety of the aircrews enforcing the SNFZ and ultimately the SNFZ itself. The coalition's choice of target sets was a reaction to Iraq's provocations, and while the coalition derived some benefit from attacking Iraqi air defences, it is possible that the Iraqi government was able to justify its actions in terms of an ongoing conflict. The nuclear facility was a significant target for two reasons: it was a WMD facility, and it was in suburban Baghdad. This created a great deal of 'pain'. The loss of the facility by force was a far worse option than the presence of inspectors. DESERT FOX saw the coalition expand its range of target sets to include RGFC and

<sup>3</sup> See p. 115 above.

<sup>4</sup> See pp. 142-152 above.



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WMD-related sites. However, this was a scheme borne of the tacit acknowledgement by the Clinton Administration that UNSCOM had lost political support. This, in turn, suggested that Iraq would go without supervision until a replacement scheme (albeit this would probably be much less intrusive) was developed. The coalition therefore sought to inflict as much damage as possible to Iraq's WMD programmes in an attempt to retard Iraq's rearmament.<sup>5</sup>

Were the means employed sufficiently destructive for the target sets? In both cases, the coalition's efforts (particularly those by manned aircraft) were hampered by the aircraft payloads, the effects of weather on weapon accuracy and battle damage assessments. Despite embarrassing incidents that suggested otherwise, the coalition was quite capable of striking and inflicting damage on targets. UNSCOM later confirmed the effects on Zaafaraniyah, and although the coalition's reporting methodology was suspect, the results of DESERT FOX show that the combination of air and unmanned power significantly damaged the Iraqi WMD programme.

Strikes against targets of greater significance was the exception rather than the norm due to broader diplomatic processes. When the diplomatic conditions appeared to be more favourable for the use of force, i.e. in January 1993 and to a limited extent, in DESERT FOX, the coalition chose more significant target sets. The coalition used threat-based coercion under two conditions. The evidence suggests that the means are far less relevant to the alteration of the adversary's decision calculus than the political situation, as the latter tends to limit the coercer's range of options.

Were the means employed effective for coercion? The answer to this question is not clear. First, there are two types of coercion, and each of these has a different metric for success, i.e. effective as a threat or effective as a penalty. Second, to discern effect in either case means that there must be

<sup>5</sup> See p. 340 above.



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some relation between the means employed and the credibility of threat and this could not be determined. Targeting was sensitive to external political influences, limiting the coalition's range of available options, and ultimately making it impossible to isolate military success from political success.

### 2. Coercion of Iraq

Over the 1990s, there was a gradual evolution towards the use of coercion as an unintended consequence of the NFZs. These started as enabling operations in Operation PROVIDE COMFORT II to provide security for the Kurds and the Shi'a in Operation SOUTHERN WATCH. NFZs were a by-product of volatile crises as well as the coalition's requirement to maintain a 'forward presence' in the Persian Gulf; this 'presence' itself was required to address the significant 'distance-time' problem identified in Chapter Four.<sup>6</sup> However, due to the flexibility of the coalition's air assets, it only involved a simple change of force structure, bomb loads and intent to go, as noted in Chapter Seven, from a mission of presence to a mission of coercion. NFZs, by themselves, were not effective at coercion. In Chapter Ten, it was noted that the change of force packages and the extension of the SNFZ (in Operation DESERT STRIKE) were an attempt at implicit coercion, but no specific demand was raised. This is also tied to the original justification for the NFZs: SCR 688. This resolution was intended to maintain international respect for Iraqi sovereignty while protecting particular Iraqi minorities. The international community tolerated the existence of the NFZs due to the humanitarian concern associated with the protection of Iraqi minorities. To tie protective measures for humanitarian purposes to an explicit threat would be unacceptable. NFZs relied on an implicit communication of threats and demands and were sufficiently controversial to see Iraq receive both offers of mitigation and hope. Their utility as a coercive tool was limited, but they were invaluable as enablers.

<sup>6</sup> See p. 121 above.



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### Cases

The second major question of this thesis cannot be answered without first establishing whether or not coercion was successful in the political sense. This is not a matter of whether or not aircraft could locate and service target sets, but rather the assessment of the effect on Iraq's leadership based on their behaviour. This will set the conditions for the examination of coercion as a means of supporting a regime of containment. The evidence from the cases will be summarised and the evidence will be examined in the light of the aforementioned criteria (less the last two). The cases under discussion are:

January 1993

VIGILANT WARRIOR

SOUTHERN WATCH (Post-August 1996)

DESERT FOX

#### *January 1993 (Coercion Success)*

The first attempt at coercion took place in January 1993. The Iraqi government was presented with two decisions to make: cooperate with UNSCOM or be forcibly disarmed, and it could either tolerate the SNFZ or have to fight for the control of its airspace.

At this time, the state of communications was fair at best. It appears that the Iraqi government did not believe the original ultimatum was anything either than a bargaining position, and offered paltry concessions in a form of haggling. It was not until the missile strike against the Zaafaraniyah nuclear facility that the Iraqi government's offers became valuable. This increased the coalition's credibility in terms of its threats, but this was somewhat constrained. (It should be noted that the use of air power implies the acceptance of risk by the coercer, but that the suppression of enemy air defences implies a concern over casualties.)



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Iraq's willpower was not easily eroded during this operation. The timing of the operation (just days before the inauguration of President Clinton) was one reason, but the Franco-American dispute presented an image of disunity. This offered the Iraqi government some hope. However, this eroded significantly with the prospect of forcible disarmament and its isolation. This isolation led to Iraq's speedy indication of its desire to negotiate through offers of increasingly valuable concessions. Coercion brought about a grudging (and perhaps feigned) willingness to cooperate in the short term.

### *VIGILANT WARRIOR (Coercion Success)*

VIGILANT WARRIOR was an attempt at threat-based coercion through power projection in order to deter an Iraqi action and deny it if deterrence failed. Air power was used to monitor the situation and to bring forces in from 'over-the-horizon'. The exact Iraqi motives remain unknown. This makes the analysis of the case more difficult, as Iraq's choice between invading Kuwait or not acting remains unknowable without access to the Iraqi archives. The nature of the communication, largely indirect or through a third party, i.e. the Russian government, further complicates the issue. The speed of the coalition's deployment demonstrated its capability to project power into the theatre, and this made its threats credible. The deployment's speed likely prevented Saddam Hussein from undertaking offensive operations at least until Iraq has an arsenal of WMDs to support such operations. The significance of WMDs thus increased. The erosion of Iraqi willpower is hard to judge, as the penalty was the maintenance of the *status quo*. In fact, the Iraqi government made the situation worse, as its actions in October 1994 renewed its isolation, despite the Russian government's offers of mitigation. VIGILANT WARRIOR was not a 'tactical' victory despite Iraq's lack of action, but a 'strategic' victory in that Iraqi actions renewed the justification for Iraq's containment. While this is a success, it had less to do with the coalition's efforts than the Iraqi government's choice of action.



*SOUTHERN WATCH POST-AUGUST 1996 (Coercion Failure)*

DESERT STRIKE was an enabling operation in response to Iraq's intervention in the KDP-PUK Civil War in August 1996. Iraq did not have a choice, as it had already withdrawn from Irbil when the coalition struck a portion of Iraq's air defences. The coalition's action was slow and came off as a reprisal as opposed to an act of coercion. This reprisal came in the form of air and missile strikes against air defence nodes in southern Iraq in order to enable the safe expansion of the SNFZ to the 33<sup>rd</sup> parallel. The extension completed the transformation of the SNFZ into a coercive instrument, but the coalition appeared to be ill prepared for actions in northern Iraq, thus weakening the credibility of its threats.

In its original iteration, the SNFZ was intended to act as a means of showing presence and monitoring Iraqi operations in southern Iraq while also enabling a rapid response to Iraqi provocations, as was aptly demonstrated in Chapter Nine. By the end of 1996, a combination of Iraqi provocations in the skies and military operations led the coalition to tailor the forces and the SNFZ to be capable of striking Baghdad at the coalition's whim. This was an attempt, as noted in Chapter Ten, at coercion with an implicit (and therefore weak) threat. It was unclear as to what the desired behaviour was beyond compliance. The 'pain' itself was not sufficient to erode Iraqi willpower and the knock-on effects of Iraq's seizure of Irbil gave the Iraqi government optimism that it could regain control within the NNFZ.

While the SNFZ extension seemed to imply the coalition's preparedness to attack Baghdad, the Iraqi government found hope from the French government's refusal to enforce the extension and its concern about the abandonment of coalition humanitarian efforts in northern Iraq. The Iraqi government saw that the coalition's cohesion and capability were waning, and that despite its rhetoric, was unable to strike the RGFC in northern Iraq. The coalition chose to attack air defence assets, a target set of limited significance, in a scheme of incremental escalation. This satisfied Clinton



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Administration criteria but failed as a coercive operation. Despite the threat, the Iraqi government became more belligerent toward UNSCOM in 1997 and 1998.

### *DESERT FOX (Coercion Failure)*

DESERT FOX was a definite attempt to coerce Iraq. The Iraqi government was presented with the choice of co-operation with UNSCOM or disarmament by force of arms. Due to the test period that followed the crisis of November 1998, it was clear to the Iraqi government what was expected and that this was a punishment for its intransigence. The Iraqi government, having good reason to believe that the coalition's operations were unpopular with the international community and would be short, chose disarmament by force, and offered limited resistance. It did so while waiting for Ramadan to occur, in the belief that coalition military operations would cease in order to avoid Islam's condemnation of conducting military strikes during its most holy observance period. The prospect of President Clinton's impeachment and the lack of credibility that surrounded all his decisions wrecked the threat's credibility. Iraq's will power was scarcely eroded. The proverbial trigger for the coalition's operations created significant political friction, and this reduced Iraq's political isolation.

A combination of international outrage at the lack of authorisation and/or consultation and the timing of the operation gave the Iraqi government both offers of change (i.e. the replacement of UNSCOM) and a genuine hope. The Iraqi government was also aware that the political conditions were such that if military operations occurred, UNSCOM would end. It had both offers of mitigation and hope because of the international outcry. The 'pain' became more than bearable.

The success or failure of coercion hinges on the erosion of willpower and the prevention of external support. In any case where external offers of support for Iraq existed, or the Iraqi government could derive hope from political support, coercion failed. When the Iraqi government was isolated



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and could not foresee anything but a deterioration of the situation, coercion succeeded.

### Assessment

Coercion was intended to support the containment of Iraq. Containment was based on the removal of its WMD capability and the maintenance of sanctions to prevent its rearmament and new military adventures. Containment was achieved to a point. Sanctions remained in place after 1998, but UNSCOM's purpose was never fulfilled as the removal of Iraq's WMDs was not completed. The regime of containment also lost credibility over time within the international community. It appeared to the international community that the coalition and UN were synonymous, although the justifications for action were based on the notion of an impartial UN acting as the world judge. The coalition's ability to influence the decision began to weaken its political position. ?

As the coalition became increasingly frustrated with the situation in the late 1990s and sought to increase the pressure on Iraq, other agencies or governments became suspicious and/or critical of the coalition's means and ultimate ends. Certain members of the coalition began to consider the prospects of removing Saddam Hussein from power, but this was beyond the pale for political reasons. This reduced the utility of coercion as a means of supporting the containment of Iraq regardless of what was struck or how much damage the coalition inflicted on significant target sets. The loss of consensus within the international community about the containment of Iraq led to two things. First, there were more indications of external support (i.e. public calls for the replacement of UNSCOM or a lifting of sanctions by third parties). Second, such statements or proposals offered the Iraqi government a good chance that its containment (in the form of diplomatic and economic sanctions) might be abandoned. This made it possible for the Iraqi government to live through any attempt at coercion. ✓



Table 20: Summary of Cases by Criteria

	January 1993	VIGILANT WARRIOR	SOUTHERN WATCH (After DESERT STRIKE)	DESERT FOX
Iraqi Choice	Cooperate with UNSCOM or be forcibly disarmed, and tolerate the SNFZ or fight for the airspace	Attack and fight, or do not attack	Behave or else	Cooperate with UNSCOM or be forcibly disarmed
Communications	Marginal	Marginal	Weak	Good
Credibility of Threat	Marginal	Good	Weak	Marginal
Erosion of Willpower	Significant	Unclear due to the nature of the situation	Weak	Weak
Isolation	Significant	Significant	Limited	Very Limited
Perception of Capability	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant
Result	Success	Qualified Success	Failure	Failure

### 3. 'Lessons' for the Future

There are really two audiences when one speaks of 'lessons' of coercion. The first are the political and military practitioners of coercion. They are interested in how to coerce an adversary successfully and how to improve the process of coercion. The second audience is composed of academics. This section will address some of the key issues for both.

#### 'Practitioner' Issues:

##### *The Limits of Political Justifications:*

The utility of political justifications is limited by the degree of harmony within the international community. Differing perceptions of the situation led to public disputes between the American and French governments. Examples included the Franco-American dispute in



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VIGILANT WARRIOR, the issue of different interpretation of the SCRs (as seen in Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten) and the concern that containment was more important than the plight of the Iraqi people as was demonstrated in the French withdrawal from PROVIDE COMFORT II.

There was also a difference in diplomatic approach to the problem of Iraq between the Bush and Clinton Administrations. The Bush Administration demonstrated a collective understanding that justifications were also constraints to action, but the Clinton Administration(s) did not seem to share this belief. It is likely that the difference was due to the American position in both eras; in the former, it still had to contend with an adversary (albeit one in decline) but in the latter, the US was the remaining superpower. The two images of the use of force (i.e. the insurance policy or the bank account) can be traced to the American position in the international community as well.<sup>7</sup> This is related to the notion of the UN as the 'world judge'. If the coalition, as the proverbial 'executioner' could influence the proverbial 'judge', then the outcomes are suspect and lack credibility within the international community.

These factors created the image that there was a 'tactical seam' within the coalition which the Iraqi government could exploit in addition to other avenues within the international community. This translated into a lack of credibility of the coalition's threats, external offers of mitigation and the promise of an end to Iraq's diplomatic and economic isolation.

*Is triumph seductive?:*

This question could easily be rephrased to ask if withdrawal was at all possible. Having defeated Iraq in 1991, the coalition became committed to Iraq's containment in the absence of a more permanent solution. So long as Iraq posed a threat to regional stability, the coalition had to maintain sanctions and make military efforts. The Iraqi threat, while reduced in the military sense

<sup>7</sup> See pp.72 and 75- 77 above.



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as identified in Chapter Five, remained in that Iraq could still menace its neighbours and act as a political spoiler. Similarly, withdrawal would have made the Gulf War seem like wasted effort if the region remained unstable. After January 1993, it would have exposed the Clinton Administration(s) to a traditional (and therefore predictable) Republican argument of a weak Democratic leader. Worse yet, it offered the possibility that the US, if not involved in that region, might be called upon to assume greater responsibilities elsewhere. This is one of the imponderables of democracies in the present era. They may be seduced by an early triumph and will not allow withdrawal without significant cost or anguish, which unfortunately leads them into an intractable situation.

### *'Forward Presence':*

The value of enabling future military operations cannot be overstated. The target state cannot help but perceive the existence and strength of military forces in the theatre. This allows the target state to assess the coercer's capability to carry out its threat in advance. If a coercer's threats are matched with actions, their credibility (in terms of the certainty of resolve) will be established in the minds of the target state's decision-makers. Similarly, it is advantageous to demonstrate unambiguously the capacity to 'control'.<sup>8</sup> This process, to a certain extent, occurred in DESERT STORM and was reinforced in VIGILANT WARRIOR through the deployment of additional forces. Forward presence made this possible.

### *'Institutional Default Settings':*

In order to coerce an adversary, policy consonance between the choice of target sets and weapons must exist. Doctrine guides military action, and militaries have a habit of employing weaponry in accordance with the prevailing belief. One could go so far as to label these as 'default settings'. In the absence of direct guidance, weapons will be employed in doctrinally acceptable manners. Unmanned weapons, for example, were conceived to

<sup>8</sup> See p. 43 above.



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strike targets that were either too distant or too well defended for manned airpower. In addition to this, the targeting system illustrated in Chapter Two prescribes a division of responsibility between political and military leadership at the strategic level and the CINC at operational level. The necessity for policy consonance may require a degree of intervention by the strategic political and military leadership reminiscent of the Vietnam era in order to ensure that the discrete threats or uses of force achieve the desired outcomes. This is anathema to the American military establishment due to the Vietnam War experience, but the military's 'default settings' of using weapons are focused on 'control'.<sup>9</sup> Coercion is a discrete use of force aimed at influencing the adversary's decision calculus in peacetime, and this requires unconventional approaches to target and weapons selection.

### *Target Sets:*

Target selection is not the key variable in the determination of success or failure. Target sets, for the purpose of coercion, must be sufficiently significant to prevent failure. From the evidence at hand, it appears that by picking the right targets, one merely reduces chances of failure. The cases of January 1993, DESERT STRIKE and DESERT FOX provide a useful illustration:

**Table 21: Coercion and Target Sets**

Case	Target Set	Result
January 1993	Air defence assets	Failure - target not significant
January 1993	Zaafaraniyah Nuclear facility	Success - target significant
DESERT FOX	WMD assets and support assets	Failure - political environment

As UNSCOM made progress between 1993 and 1998, Iraq's supply of WMDs dwindled and this raised their significance in the eyes of the Iraqi government. Yet they were the prime target in DESERT FOX and the

<sup>9</sup> See p. 43 above.



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coalition failed to coerce Iraq. It is still possible to fail to coerce an adversary if the right targets are selected, but it is impossible to coerce an adversary if insignificant targets are threatened or struck. The appropriation selection of target sets is merely a pre-condition for success and not its determinant.

### Central Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated that the means used for coercion had little, if any, discernible effect on the outcome of any given crisis. The political and diplomatic context of any given crisis, on the other hand, seemed to determine the outcome in advance of the threat or use of force. Consequently, the central conclusion of this thesis is that success in coercion is contingent on the setting of the appropriate political conditions (ones can be supported by the use of force) within the international community. Successful coercion borders on 'control' by shaping the adversary's choice, without actually imposing one's will by force of arms.<sup>10</sup> It should not be a mere reaction to a belligerent's provocations, but a carefully conceived and prepared action executed to support a broad diplomatic plan. Acting in the absence of appropriate political conditions due to a crisis is excusable; failing to set suitable conditions over time is ineptitude. Coercion is a waste of effort and munitions without those diplomatic efforts needed to keep the adversary in a psychologically weak position. ✓

<sup>10</sup> See p. 43 above.



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